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In Memoriam
ELLEN, SARAH, AND ALBERTA



BY
GEORGINA WINTER

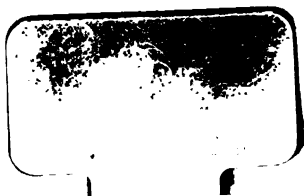


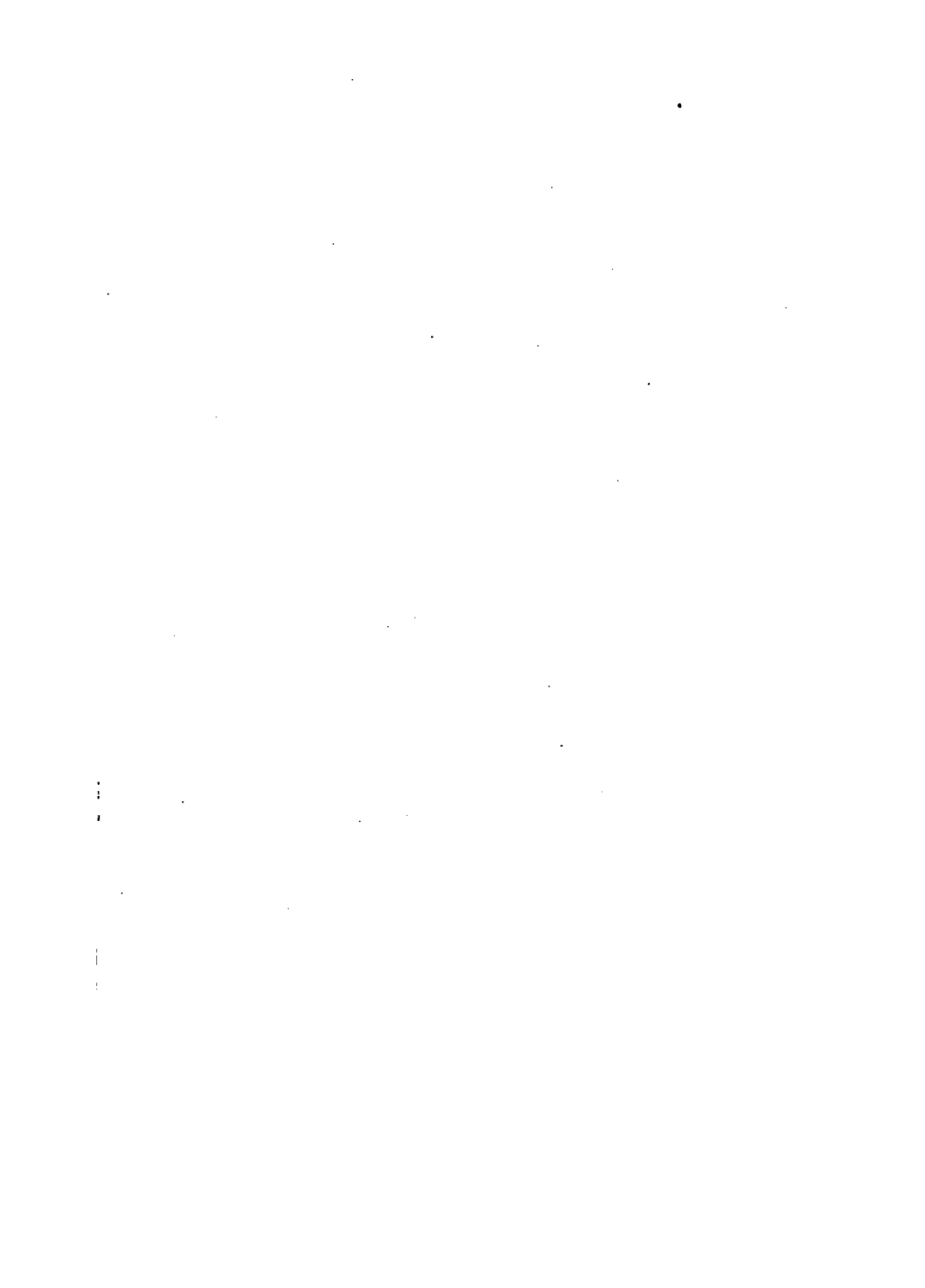
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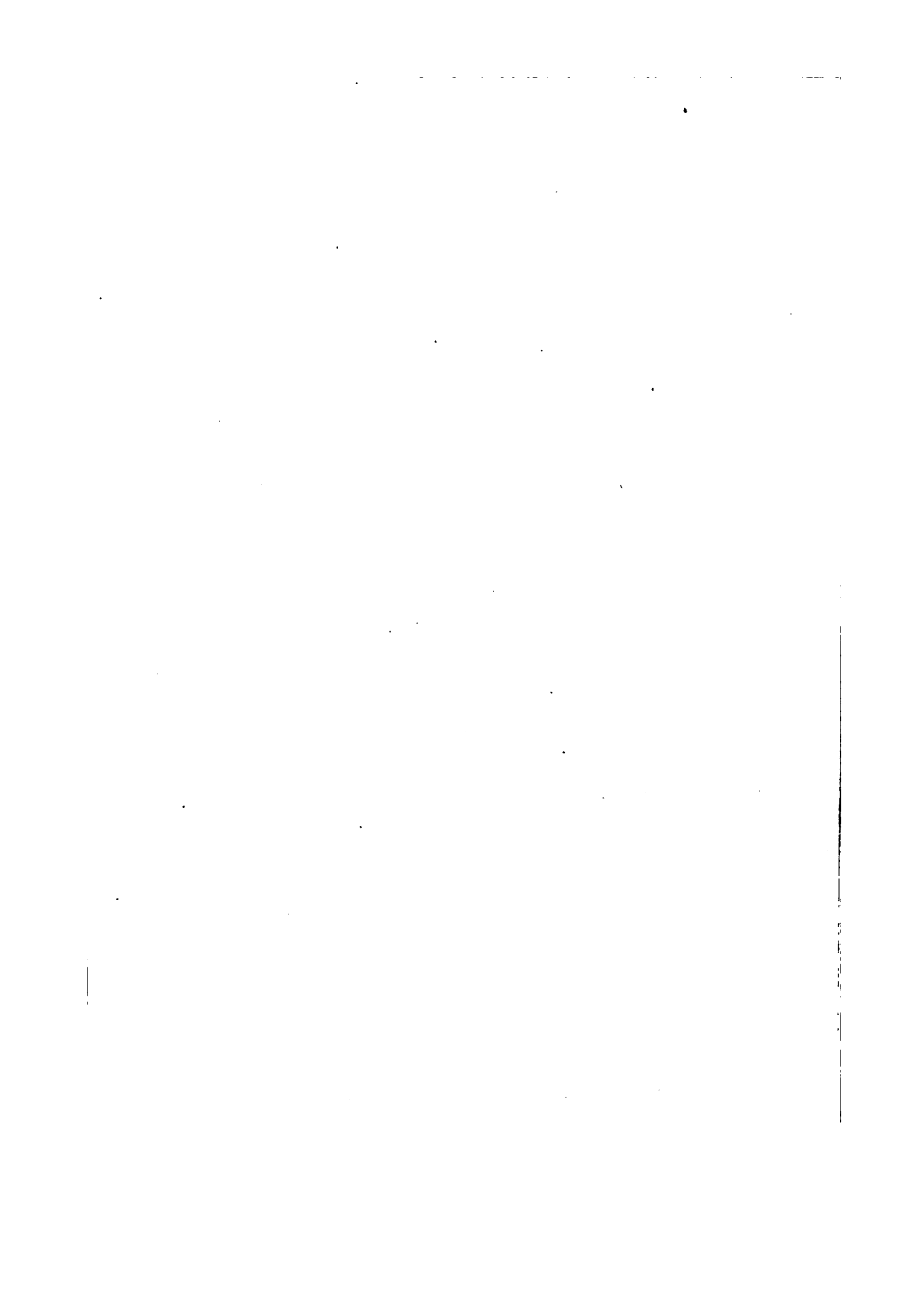
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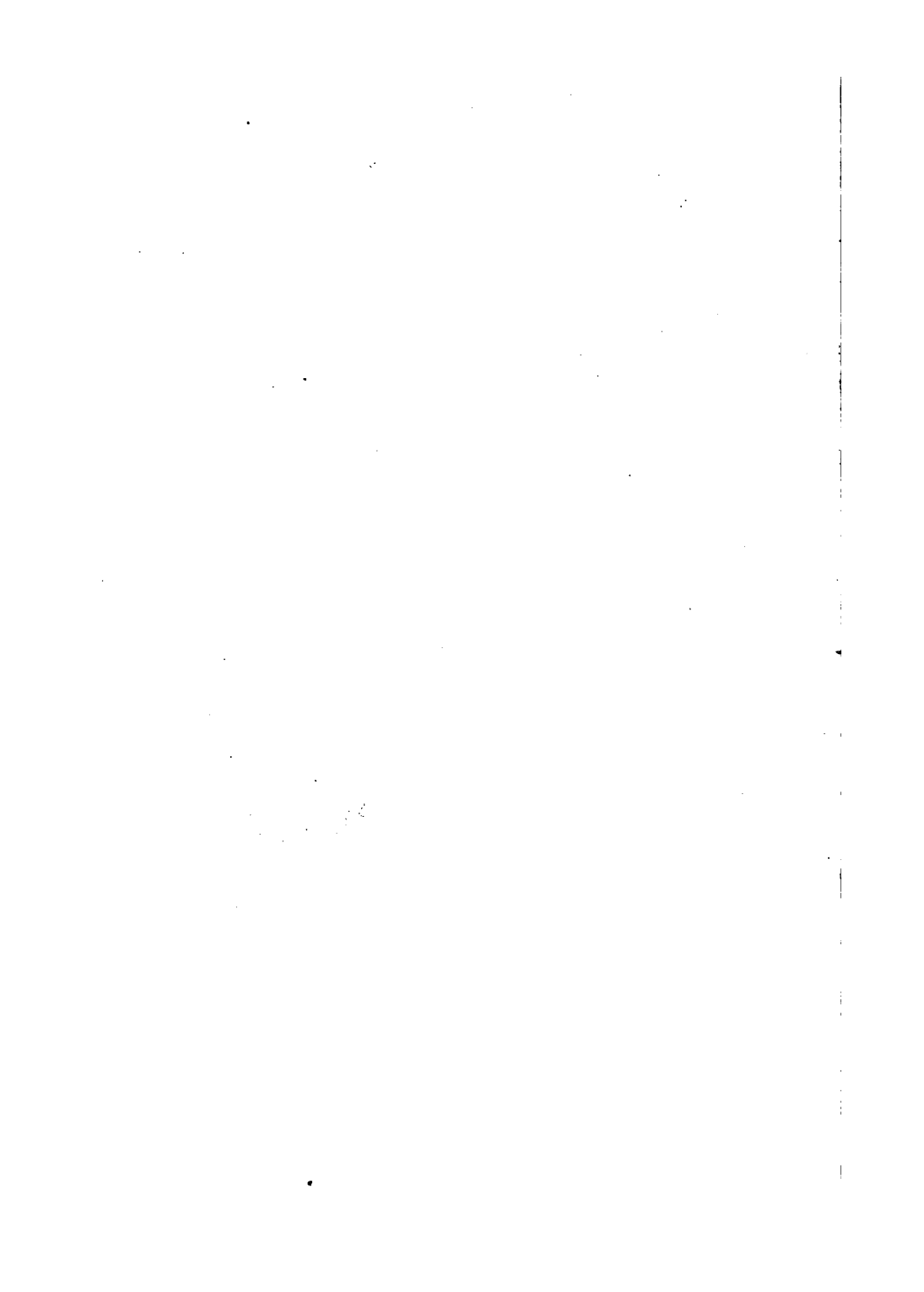




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IN MEMORIAM;
ELLEN, SARAH, AND ALBERTA.

BY
GEORGINA WINTER.



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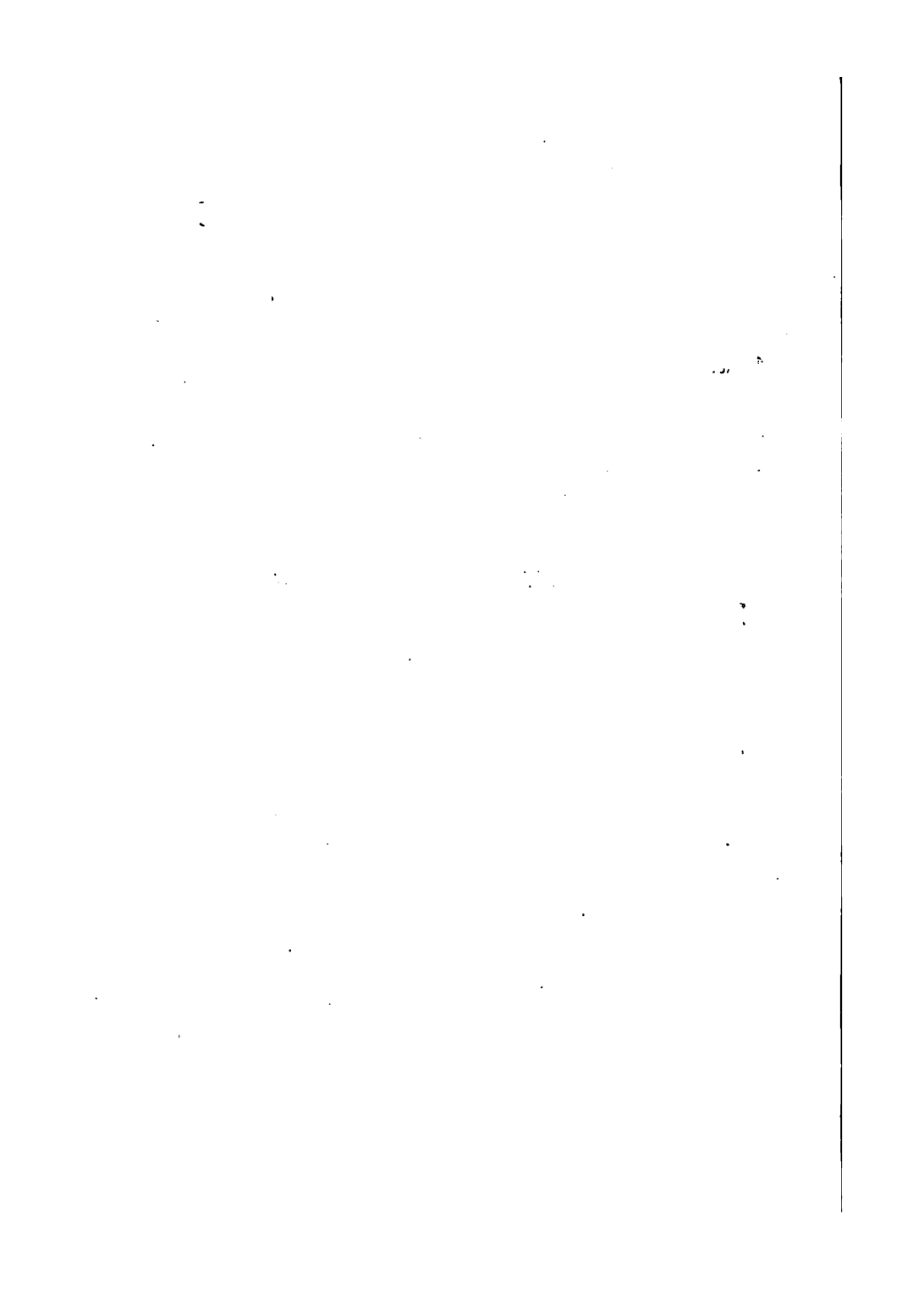
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DEDICATED

TO THE MEMORY OF
THE REV. VALENTINE GREEN,
WHO WAS FOR MANY YEARS RECTOR OF BIRKIN,
YORKSHIRE,
AND FORMERLY OF KNIPTON, LEICESTERSHIRE ;
AND WHO,
AFTER A LIFE OF UNWEARIED LABOUR IN HIS MASTER'S
SERVICE,
FELL ASLEEP, DECEMBER 2ND, 1873.



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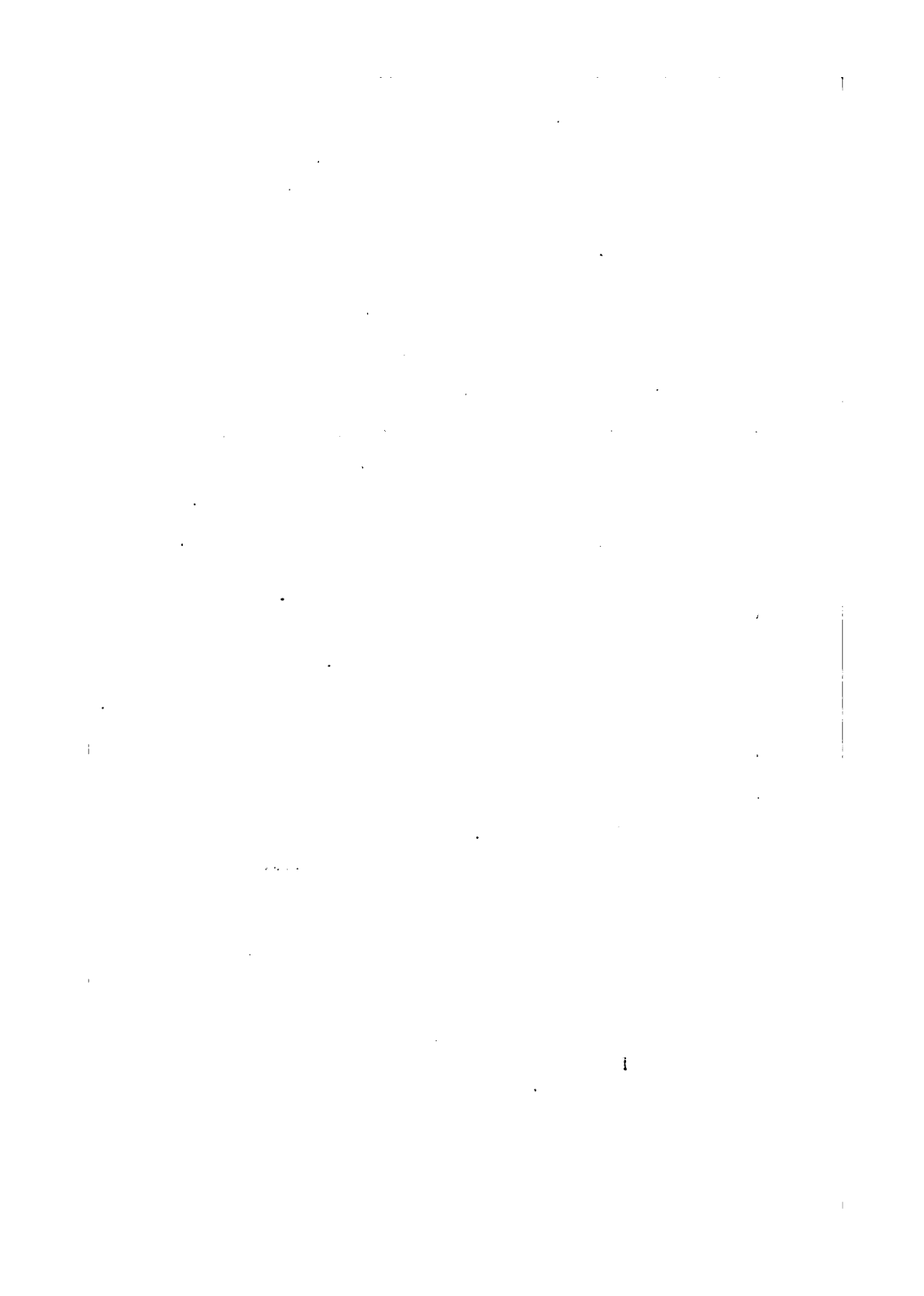
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PREFACE.

IN presenting these sketches of three sisters who quickly followed each other in the path of suffering to that land where suffering is unknown, the authoress has faithfully, though feebly, tried to show how heavy afflictions may be borne even with cheerfulness, when He, the Son of God, walks in the furnace with His tried ones.

Where she has been obliged to mention herself, it has been because she could not carry on the narrative otherwise, and she humbly prays that He who refuseth not "a cup of cold water given to a disciple in the name of a disciple," will take all that is His, and use it for His glory, pardon what is hers, and Himself receive all the praise.

July 17th, 1877.





IN MEMORIAM.

CHAPTER I.

REASONS FOR PUBLISHING—A GLIMPSE AT ELLEN'S
CHILDHOOD—APPOINTMENT AS A TEACHER—EXECU-
TION OF HER WORK—SECOND CAUSES—CONFIRMATION
—FIRST COMMUNION—FAILING HEALTH—INTELLEC-
TUAL PURSUITS.

THE beloved one, whose memory these pages are intended to perpetuate, was early taught in the school of affliction those lessons which can alone be learnt there.

In the humble hope that these recollections may encourage and comfort some similarly afflicted one, as Ellen herself in her dark hours was often comforted by hearing read "The Life of Fanny Bickersteith," and that some praying mother may be encouraged under all circumstances, how trying

soever, to strengthen the feeble knees, the writer sends this little volume into the religious world, for whose eyes alone it is intended. And may He, who sometimes makes use of the "weak things of the world to confound the wise," use it for His own glory.

Of the first few years of Ellen's life little need be said. Around her own family circle she has left behind her "Footprints on the sands of time."

As a child, she was timid, nervous, and thoughtful. The delicate texture of her mind required careful and loving training in its first attempts at learning; and she often needed affection's cheering help to urge her onward. And here we would venture to suggest to mothers the vast importance of taking the early training of their children into their own hands; to beware how they trust these tender plants to unskilful hands. It requires all a mother's tender, persevering, unwearied, prayerful care, to unlock the vast storehouse of the mind, and fill it with proper food—"To teach the young ideas how to shoot," to point to Heaven, and lead the way. And the end. O, what will it be, to be able to say, "Here, Lord, am I, and the children whom Thou hast given me!" As she grew older, Ellen was steady and persevering in the path of duty. No amount of physical weariness made her shrink therefrom. Her general habit was one of quiet thoughtfulness, considerably sobered down, perhaps unnaturally so, by those domestic trials which are often consequent upon a large family with small means. These trials, as she afterwards said, filled her young heart with sorrow.

Trained in such a school, with an exceedingly fine and sensitive temperament, she became *older* than her years; and at the age when most girls are light and gay, she was sober and grave.

Whilst yet a child, comparatively, in years, she became a teacher in a school in the east of Lincolnshire, where she continued to labour until her heavenly Father drew her aside, to closer and more intimate communion with Himself. How well she executed her work was testified by the head master of the said school, who declared that she was well qualified to fill a higher sphere of labour. A very few years, however, served to show that she was physically and mentally unfit for the kind of work she was called upon to perform. She began to droop; yet she went on from month to month, working and uncomplaining; her friends perceiving not, or not sufficiently heeding, the gradual decay of strength, and the strong under-current of feeling that was going on. How often it happens that man's blindness—man's carelessness and negligence—are permitted and overruled, in bringing about the *All-wise purposes of Infinite wisdom*.

Believing, as we do, that not a sparrow falls to the ground unnoticed by our Father in Heaven, and that the hairs of his children's head are all numbered, we are led to the conclusion that—

"Behind a frowning Providence
He hides a smiling face."

The rudder rudely grasped, may only serve to hasten the tempest-tossed bark to its destined haven of rest.

The devouring tempest may be the harbinger of sunshine and health—the desolating war, the forerunner

of peace. The All-wise Father has a purpose to fulfil and a mighty plan to develop, in the execution of which He often permits, and works by, human agency, still overruling all for His own glory and His people's eternal good. Second causes, to which we in our blindness attach so much importance, cannot really affect the child of God. He is in his Father's care and keeping, and when the mystery of Providence respecting him is complete, and the map of his earthly life laid out before him, the grateful aspiration of his glorified Spirit will doubtless be: "He hath done all things well." But we have anticipated events, and return to our narrative. On March 27th, 1867, Ellen was confirmed. Her family knew but little of the workings of her own mind at the time; yet her countenance evinced that she was deeply affected by the solemn rite.

Bishop Jackson's powerful and heart-searching addresses made her tremble and feel afraid, as she said, to answer "I do" to the momentous question "Do ye here, in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your Baptism, ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons, and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe, and to do, all those things which your Godfathers and Godmothers then undertook for you?"

On March 31st she received the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. A sense of her own unworthiness and unfitness, as she thought, to partake of those holy mysteries oppressed her.

But this sense of unworthiness did not keep her back; on the contrary, during the short interval that

elapsed between this first Communion and her lingering illness, she embraced every opportunity of commemorating her Redeemer's dying love in the Holy Eucharist. And it was very pleasing on these solemn occasions to witness the sweet humility and utter renunciation of self. Her example seemed to say to those of her own age, "Come, taste and see that the Lord is gracious."

The ensuing autumn, with its mellow sunshine and golden grain, brought holidays to the school, but weakness and weariness to Ellen. Rest, however, and the cheerful companionship of her sisters, who were also home for their vacation, appeared to do her good; so that, at the recommencement of her work, she seemed better and stronger. But in a few weeks the old feelings returned. Still, day by day, and week by week, she went on in the round of duty, none apprehending that the lovely flower was fast fading—that its head would soon droop, and its little all of earthly sweetness be emitted for ever.

Notwithstanding the languor of these months, she continued her own private studies, consisting of English, French, and music. For the latter she had a fine ear, and her execution at the pianoforte was sweetly expressive of the tone of her own mind. Soft and plaintive music had for her a peculiar charm, and her friends have a melancholy pleasure in remembering *how* the manner in which she sung and played some of her favourite pieces touched their hearts with an indefinite kind of feeling they could not understand. For instance, a passage in "Marion's Song"—

"The angels will keep her for ever—for ever."

seemed, though they knew it not—

“To sing the prelude of her fate.”

But sacred music had for her the greatest charm, and
the well-known hymns—

“How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear;
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.”

and

“Nearer, my God, to Thee—
Nearer to Thee;
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me,
Still all my prayer shall be,
Nearer, my God, to Thee—
Nearer to Thee.”

were her especial favourites.

In the evening, when wearied and worn with the day's fatigues, she used to play and sing, and often remarked that music was for her more a recreation than a study.

The state of her health had now become a serious question, and it was resolved that a lighter sphere of work should be sought for her the ensuing Christmas.

On the 6th of November she complained of severe pains in the back, and said to one of the teachers, “I don't think I shall be able to come much longer.” The words were too true—she never went again. During the whole of that evening the severe pains continued, throwing a shadow over the family gathering who had met to keep their mother's birthday.



CHAPTER II.

INCREASING ILLNESS—HOPES AND FEARS—THE VALLEY
OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH—RETURNING LIGHT—
FIRST COMMUNION IN THE SICK ROOM—ANXIOUS WEEK
—CLOSE OF 1867—BEGINNING OF 1868.

A DARK and heavy November morning brought with it renewed anxiety respecting Ellen. She rose from her bed but was obliged to return to it. Later in the day, however, she got up, but with the feeling of increasing illness. In the evening the family doctor was called in. He gave no decided opinion as to the nature of the illness, but prescribed medicine for her. The next day found her still very poorly. From a record kept at the time, and during her tedious illness, and which we must beg to introduce to the reader, as it details the different phases of her spiritual life and bodily decay, we quote the following:—

“Nov. 9th, Dear Ellen is not nearly so well and cannot keep off the sofa at all. Her doctor seems to apprehend fever. A young friend who has been staying with us some weeks, and whose health is fast declining left us this morning.”

For this young friend's spiritual state, Ellen had felt deep concern, as it was too evident, she was hastening to the grave. A few months terminated her young life and it was hoped and believed that she died in the Lord. It may be mentioned as a rather striking coincidence that the room this friend left in the morning, Ellen with trembling steps entered at night, never more on earth to have the free use of her legs.

"Nov. 10th, Sunday. I stayed with dear E—— all day. She is still worse and is greatly exhausted. Every symptom seems to indicate increasing fever. "O Lord, undertake Thou for her."

During the next five days, the symptoms varied little. The fever rather increased than otherwise. Patience characterized her whole deportment. The family love which had always been more or less conspicuous, now shone with a brightness which illuminated the sad chamber of suffering and cheered like a reviving cordial, the drooping hearts of her sorrowing parents. The dear sister (if only she could stay for a few minutes) would take a two-miles' walk to speak a word of comfort and hope to the darling sufferer, or the distant brother and sister would write a loving and consolatory letter, each, vieing with each, to strengthen the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees.

"Nov. 16th. The day of holy rest has been one of extreme bodily weakness and prostration to our dear sufferer. I read to her part of Isaiah xli., and in prayer we both found it good to be here."

"17th. From 3.30 to 8 a.m. dear E—— was excessively ill and low, and we thought she was fast hastening. After giving her several restoratives, however, died. 'All glory be to Thee, O Lord.'"

The next two days seemed to bring improved symptoms, and we find—"Nov. 20th. Our dear E—— is going on favourably. Her doctor said to-day her complaint had not assumed a specific type—it had been 'continued fever.' This evening she talked to me freely about herself. She said the following verse had been uppermost in her mind the greater part of last week:—

“‘Nearer my God to Thee,
Nearer to Thee;
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me,
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer my God to Thee,
Nearer to Thee.’”

She lamented her former coldness and formality in prayer, her hard and sometimes wicked thoughts towards those who had vexed and worried her. She remarked how comfortable she had felt after her confirmation and first Communion, but regretted her after deadness, and said that once in particular, after hearing, almost unimpressed, a faithful sermon from the Rev. J. W——, she had come home self-abased.

At her request I read several hymns expressive of penitence and of praise. Then she complained of extreme lowness, and a fearful attack of exhaustion followed, but at length yielded to the remedies applied, and she fell asleep. Even so “He giveth His beloved sleep.”

Two days of extreme prostration ensued, when she could neither talk nor be talked to. How often did the silent prayer ascend to Heaven that the Saviour's

strength might be made perfect in her weakness. But hope, for a little time revived the hearts of her family, and we find—

“Nov. 23rd. Our dear one is somewhat better. All thanks and praise be to our Heavenly Father.”

“24th. Again the Sabbath. May Sabbath blessings be showered upon our sick room. Though very weak, we are very thankful for the slight improvement in our dear one.”

The dear invalid seemed now to have arrived at an important crisis, at a point when the least rough wind might force the already shattered bark back to ocean storms, and so prevent its ever reaching the port now in sight. An unexpected trial came. It seemed that the sweet intercourse, which had, during these days of weakness, existed between mother and daughter, must now suffer an interruption, in the removal of the former to her public duties. This, however, by the advice of her doctor, was overruled, but she suffered a relapse, which he, the doctor, however, hoped would only be temporary, as he thought her system was undergoing a change, and prescribed a corresponding change of diet, with the free intercourse, as she could bear it, of *all* her family.

“Nov. 27. This afternoon, Alberta took her Bible and read several chapters to the dear sufferer. The conversation which passed between them was truly pleasing, shewing that Ellen herself had tasted the sweetness of the word which bringeth salvation, *and that the dear little one who was soon to follow in her path of suffering was learning to drink at the same fountain.*”*

* Added after Alberta's death.

"30th. Our dear E——has enjoyed the society of her sisters, but there is an overwhelming weakness which makes us all feel anxious."

"Dec. 1st, Advent Sunday.—This has been a day of great weariness and extreme weakness to our dear sufferer, and there seems great reason to fear lest nature should succumb. I read to her the lessons for the day. She listened with devout attention, and then tried to move her poor weak body in an attitude for prayer. She has talked when she could, and all she says goes to prove that her feet are on the Rock of Ages, therefore we desire to leave her in the Lord's hands."

"2nd. To-day has been one of great weakness and complete prostration. She has been deeply lamenting her own shortcomings. She was reminded that she had been given to the Lord in baptism, and that she had given herself afresh to Him at Confirmation. 'Yes, I tried to do so, but I have fallen far short of the vows then made.' The Redeemer's all-sufficient sacrifice and perfect obedience were pointed out to her as the only sure ground of comfort and safety for the desponding soul."

Ellen for a time walked in darkness. She tried to take comfort but could not. The accuser of the brethren was permitted to harass her with doubts and fears respecting her own personal safety—should she be called away by this affliction. The Valley of the Shadow of Death opened before her, and in order to reach the Gate of Heaven she had to pass the mouth of hell. How many of the Lord's people, on their way to the heavenly city are thus led! Truly, His ways are unsearchable and His thoughts past finding out; and we may not say, What doest Thou?

"Dec. 3rd. About 10 A.M. to-day our darling was taken much worse. Her jaws became set as if in death, and a paroxysm of a most alarming character succeeded, and lasted for some hours. Body, soul, and spirit, seemed in conflict with the powers of darkness. The perspiration stood in drops on her face, and her agonised cries pierced our hearts. 'Am I dying? O, I don't want to die!' Sight itself failed her, and it was only by grasping the hands of those she loved, that she could be assured they were near her. Her own impression was that she was dying, and her constant repetition of 'O, I love you so, I don't want to die!' only added to our grief. Her doctor's 'I hope not,' with a kind entreaty to try to be calm, as her life depended on her doing so, failed to quiet her, whilst we silently and fervently prayed that the Man of Sorrows who sweat for her 'great drops of blood' would Himself comfort and heal her stricken soul. At her request, her friend Dr. C—— had been sent for; he tried to comfort her with our dear Lord's own words to His sorrowing disciples—'Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.' After he had prayed, she was somewhat calmer, but it seemed as if quietude could not come, her mental agony was so great. Violent sickness ensued which lasted for several hours, and between the attacks she was too paralysed to betray any emotion. In the evening Dr. C—— again visited her. He read from First Peter: '*Blessed* be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance in-

corruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith even the salvation of your souls.' The Doctor then prayed that she might realize the fulness of these *exceeding, great and precious* promises. Then in company with her sorrowing sisters, we watched the weary hours of night away, silently beseeching Him who has promised to make 'His people a willing people in the day of His power' would, if he were about to take our beloved one, make her '*willing*' to give up every earthly affection. Towards morning, the mental agony appeared to subside, and she dozed at intervals."

"4th. Our dear one has rallied slightly, although her doctor said there was great lassitude in the whole system, and the pulse much too quick. 'Father, into thy hands we commend her.'"

"5th. This has been a day of great weakness and weariness. Her friend Dr. C—— visited her, and read Ps. cxxx., 'Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice: let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If Thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?'

But there is forgiveness with Thee, that thou mayest be feared. I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning. Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is plenteous redemption, and He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.' ”

This selection was most appropriate, harassed as she is with doubts and fears respecting the safety of her soul. Tempest-tossed, seeking rest, and finding none—burdened with conscious guilt and an oppressive sense of her own shortcomings, crying from the depths of her inner sorrow, and scarcely daring to hope in the Lord. With the Psalmist she could indeed say, “If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?” She said, “If I had died yesterday, my great fear was lest I should not go to Heaven. Before my illness I often only said my prayers, I felt so tired, I did not pray; then, when I went to bed, my conscience kept me awake, I could not sleep.” I pointed her to the bleeding Lamb of God, and reminded her of the “Faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” even the chief of sinners, and prayed that the loving Saviour, by the power of His spirit, would draw her to Himself, and give her clear views of the plan of salvation.

This crisis through which Ellen passed was weary and painful. Fearfulness and trembling came upon her, and a horrible dread overwhelmed her, the “sorrows of death compassed her, and the pains of hell got hold upon her”; but she was not left altogether without glimpses of light now and then broke through

the overshadowing darkness, and peace would stretch her healing wing over the stricken soul. By degrees she was led to cast her soul, with all its gloomy doubts, upon the sinner's Friend. But as the dawning light is oftentimes but faintly seen, and then seems again to disappear, so was it with E——, for we find :—

“Dec. 7th. The last two days have been days of great anxiety. Our poor E——'s weakness increases, and the mental distress she laboured under on Tuesday has not wholly subsided. The cloud is not yet removed. The fear of death still harasses her. But it cannot, will not be, that this loved one, prayed-for one, shall be taken from all she holds so dear on earth before she is favoured with glimpses of eternal glory, and made willing to depart. To-day our vicar tried to pour consolation, drawn from the open Fountain, into her troubled soul; but her excessive weakness prevented her taking in much comfort.”

“8th. This has been a day of terrible weakness, and our hearts have sunk within us. Often as its hallowed hours have sped by, has the agonized prayer ascended to Heaven on her behalf.”

“10th. Our worthy vicar again visited our dear one; and this time she received comfort. Her gloomy doubts seem to have vanished, for which our souls are filled with praise.”

The next four days were passed in great weakness and restlessness; yet no murmuring, no repining, marked the weary hours. Her life seemed ebbing away, and we scarcely dared to hope that it would be granted to our prayers. Her minister had asked her if she would like to receive Holy Communion, and our next entry states :—

"15th, Sunday. To-day the first Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ was celebrated in our sick room. We (her parents) and her friend Dr. C—— celebrated with her in those holy mysteries. Her excessive weakness vented itself in tears; yet her mind was peaceful, resting alone on Christ the Rock of Ages, and she told Dr. C—— that, *that* Communion had been a comfort to her.

But peace was soon withdrawn, and two days later we find her again walking in darkness, clinging to life and fearing death. Doubtless her overpowering bodily weakness had much to do with it. Even now her nervous system was so depressed that Satan seems to have taken advantage thereof to harass her mind with gloomy forebodings. Wave upon wave passed over her tempest-tossed spirit, yet in these dark seasons sufficient strength was given to keep her from sinking. Like David, she would utterly have fainted, but that she believed verily to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

"19th. Mr. G—— again visited our dear stricken child, and unfolded to her the plan of salvation, setting forth the Saviour clearly and fully in his manifold offices, and ended with a very appropriate and earnest prayer. There seems little prospect of her recovery, still this clinging to life remains. She trusts wholly and solely to Christ alone for salvation. If our Father is about to call her to Himself, may He loosen these earthly affections by revealing to her Jesus in His surpassing excellence."

"20th. To-day there has been a slight alleviation of the overpowering weakness. Poor E—— said this

morning that she felt 'sure her powers of endurance had been overtaxed, that both body and mind had become exhausted, and that she had long felt it *would* come to a crisis."

This is a painful phase in this heavy affliction. Hard to understand, difficult to reconcile, why we, who loved her as dearly as we love our own lives, should have permitted the worm of care to eat away her strength, ere we were scarcely aware of its existence, and cause the beautiful life to vanish, leaving behind it glimpses of what it might have been, and can only be excused by the fact that she was naturally reticent. Surely, 'Clouds and darkness are round about Him; yet righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His seat.' What we know not now, we shall know hereafter. When His great plan is completed, *then* the mystery of our individual life will be cleared up, and what now appears dark and contradictory, will *then* be found to have been in perfect harmony with the Divine purpose.

"22nd. Some doubts respecting her own personal safety still hang over the dear one's mind, yet we have had some sweet conversation to-day on the '*exceeding great and precious promises.*'"

"25th. Our dear one sleeps quietly this happy Christmas morning. May the angel's song of 'Peace on earth, good-will to men,' usher in her waking moments.'"

"26th. This morning her doctor said our dear E—— was getting on nicely. Our hearts are filled with gratitude."

For several successive days there was no perceptible change. A lull in the disease was afforded, which

enabled her to enjoy the society of her brothers and sisters during their Christmas vacation. Her sick room was the favourite resort, and the cheerful and contented manner with which she was learning to bear her afflictions divested it of gloom. It was—

“As if the flowers of sweet content,
Though nipt by sin, were surely meant
To bloom on earth awhile.
Sweet emblems of the happier state,
Where perfect love the saints await,
Beyond the vale of death.”

All were full of hope that the object of their loving solicitude would yet be restored to health and strength.





CHAPTER III.

FAVOURABLE SYMPTOMS—HOPES OF RETURNING HEALTH
—THE SEA SIDE—FEARS—RETURN HOME—INCREAS-
ING WEAKNESS—NOTES FROM HER OWN JOURNAL—
LONGINGS FOR IMMORTALITY.

THE beginning of 1868 found Ellen still confined to her sick bed, where, for several weeks the struggle between returning health and continued suffering and weakness waged constant war, and when at length she was carried down stairs, it was only for a very short time that she could bear the fatigue of joining with the family circle. It was hoped that the warm spring days would invigorate the feeble frame, and energize the relaxed system. And when those spring days *did* come, she was taken out of doors in a Bath chair, tended by her loving sister, Sarah, who, for some months ensuing, became her nurse and constant companion; and whose cheerful disposition and happy turn of mind, relieved the weary days, and lessened the loneliness of the sufferer. As the summer advanced, the two spent hours together, seated under the trees, enjoying in each others' society the play of the gentle zephyrs, and the insect

music with which they were surrounded. Sometimes talking of the "better land," where the inhabitants shall no more say "I am sick;" at other times indulging in youthful fancies and reveries as to what each would be doing when Ellen should become strong. And so the days passed imperceptibly away, the current of time leaving behind it little of changing incident, and little or no increasing strength to the invalid. After the Midsummer holidays, her dear sister S—— left her, she having engaged herself as a governess in a school at N——, where Ellen was to have gone, if her health had permitted. This severing of the two devoted sisters was a great trial to both; but with her usual patient fortitude, Ellen bore it bravely. The summer was now fast advancing, and having brought no more strength to the weakened frame than spring had done, serious apprehensions as to E——'s ultimate recovery again took possession of her family. Day by day her doctor could perceive no improvement. He advised change of air and scene, and suggested a visit to the sea side, hoping she might derive benefit from sea air. As she was too weak to undertake a long journey, and as means were also wanting, the coast nearest home was selected. Accordingly on the first of August, 1868, Ellen was taken to Frieston Shore, quite as much unable to walk as she had been six months before. One day she would seem to rally and gather a little strength—the next she was weak and low as ever. A sea-water bath was used daily; at first she could not bear the shock, but by degrees she became accustomed to it. Her gentle, loving spirit, and patient endurance of suffering, were noticed by all the visitors who were then staying at the

same hotel, and she became a general favourite. Many were the little acts of kindness she received, and friendships made. Ellen's was a *daily, living* faith, showing itself in the patient endurance of weakness, borne with resignation to the will of God. It was doubtless this which attracted the notice of strangers; may they not have taken knowledge of her "That she had been with Jesus." She was unable to write much, but some of her letters will show the opinion she entertained regarding her health.

"Marine Hotel, Frieston Shore,

"August 10th.

"My dear Sarah,—

"I think it is hardly fair for me to write to you before you write to me. I am so pleased you get on nicely, and that you are in good spirits. I hope I shall improve more the two next weeks than I have done this week, else I shall not go home much improved. When we leave here we are going to H—— for three weeks. When the tides are good we see a great deal of company. They come from Boston in the omnibus. I like the place very well, but in the evening, the air seems too strong. There are various opinions about my walking, some think I am lame, others that I have had an accident. I am sure that when the wind blows my dress, they look to see if my ancles are deformed. Mrs. L—— lent me several nice books to bring with me—— I am writing this in bed. Good-bye.

"Your loving Sister,

"NELLIE."

" Frieston Shore,
" August 17th.

" My dear E——,

" I received your letter on Saturday. I was very sorry to hear that you had been so poorly; but I hope your visit will do you good in every way. I must tell you a little about myself. I can walk a little better, my legs and back feel stronger, the washing with seawater has done them good, but I cannot say I feel any better in my health, as I am often very poorly. We leave the Shore, if all be well, on Saturday 22nd, for H——, then, I hope, I shall be able to say I feel really better. Many people come here from Nottingham—there is a special train from Nottingham to Boston. You must excuse a longer letter as I feel tired. With love,

" Your loving Friend,
" NELLIE."

After remaining at Frieston Shore three weeks without any apparent improvement, and acting upon her doctor's advice, she was taken into Leicestershire. The journey was performed with much discomfort. Several miles had to be travelled in an open carriage in a drenching rain, and a three hours' detention at the railway station, where she lay on the sofa in the waiting-room quite prostrated, added to the fatigues of the journey, and caused her mother's heart to be wrung with keen and bitter anguish—anguish the more keen and bitter, because, for want of means, she was powerless to help. A soft and comfortably-cushioned carriage might have been obtained, in which the weary

fainting one might have reclined with some semblance of ease, but the *money* to procure such a luxury was wanting. In an agony of mental grief, and with drenching clothes she paced up and down the platform in earnest prayer that God would, for Christ's sake, hide her stricken one in the hollow of His hand until the calamity was overpast. And so it proved, for as soon as the rain abated, the friend who had promised, arrived with a conveyance to take her to her destination, and the ill effects of the journey were only temporary, for in a day or two she appeared as usual. Another medical man was consulted, who gave it as his opinion that there was spinal irritation—a depressed state of the system—left by the “continued” fever, which he considered had been brought on by overtaxation of mind and body. The absence of tubercles was in her favour, and he thought, with extreme care and attention, she might recover.

In the quiet village of H—— Ellen stayed a month : in the midst of lovely and picturesque scenery, and amongst friends whose daily thought and anxiety were ever on the watch, to relieve the weary hours and minister comfort to the stricken one. A blessing seemed to be resting upon the means used, inasmuch as the nights were less restless, and there appeared a slight increase of strength and animal spirits. In a letter to her sister she says, “We are so quiet here—a change after Frieston, where we were always seeing fresh faces;” and to a friend, “I am better and stronger than when I left Frieston. I think this air suits me best. I can walk farther and better. I keep taking cod-liver oil and medicine regularly. We return home

(D.V.) a week on Monday. I shall have been out a little over seven weeks. The scenery here is very beautiful. I quite enjoy it. We have had some hot days. I am so thankful that it is cooler to-day. I want to make a collection of ferns. If you see any different kinds, will you dry some for me? If you will, I shall think it a great favour. I hope I shall be quite a traveller by the time I get home." And again to her sister, "I feel better to-day than I have felt all the week."

Like David she had often longed for the "Courts of the Lord," and being then very near the Church, she decided to go thither on the first Sunday she should feel strong enough. Accordingly we find,—

"Sept. 13th, 1868. Dear E——ventured to Church this afternoon. She very soon became faint and it was with difficulty she remained until the end of the first lesson. Whilst the Magnificat was being chanted, we took her out in a fainting state; and though the distance to her temporary home was very short, it required an hour to perform it, being obliged to rest repeatedly and have recourse to restoratives. What a wreck of her former self she is! May we have patience to bear this heavy trial in submission to our Father's will."

The journey home occasioned her much weariness and uneasiness in her back. Her Vicar kindly sent his carriage to the station to meet her. To reach her home was a source of great joy and thankfulness. Her own medical man thought, the change had improved her general health; but upon examining her spine, saw reason to fear that there was a softening of the bone going on. In order to arrest the disease, he made two issues, one on

each side of the upper portion of the backbone. These caused much suffering. Caustic had frequently to be applied to prevent their healing up. On these occasions she suffered without a murmur. The perspiration would stand in large drops on her forehead; the outer man trembling with anguish, whilst the inner man remained strong to endure. A recurrence of those fit-like attacks, from which she had never been entirely free since that never-to-be-forgotten December day, and which were evidently caused by cerebral disease, came on again. When she had been at home only a few days she was suddenly seized with one. It required masculine strength to hold her. Her screams were piercing and her wail piteous. When the paroxysm subsided she was carried to bed in a thoroughly prostrated condition. These attacks were always accompanied with a horrible dread and darkness of mind, even to despair. For the time being it seemed to her as if the Almighty had forsaken her, and her God had forgotten her, that her sins were too great to be forgiven, and that she would ultimately be a castaway. At these painful seasons her friends were almost powerless to help. She could lay hold on no promise, and receive no comfort. Her reasoning powers were incapable of action; her mind was absorbed in dread despondency, whilst fancy conjured up imaginary beings, and sounds unearthly seemed to greet her ears. One of her doctors said that those symptoms were sure proofs of spinal disease. The brain and spinal marrow being so intimately connected, one could not suffer without affecting the other, and the terror of mind during these painful paroxysms was occasioned by an irritated state of the brain. The

hopes which had been entertained that a change of air and scene would have alleviated these distressing attacks were now dashed to pieces.

It had become too cold to go out in the bath chair, and it was only for very short distances that she could walk, so that she was almost entirely confined to the house, and from a fatal necessity, obliged to spend many hours alone. She could not pursue needlework for any length of time; writing caused her pain, so that reading became her principal recreation, which, when her strength permitted, she relieved by music. Notes taken from her journal will best show the workings of her inner life at this period.

"Nov. 17th, 1868. I feel so miserable, so repining. I know it is very wrong to complain, but I cannot help it. Mr. J—— came in at night and ordered me lime water twice a day. I am also going to take pills three times a day to check my extreme restlessness, which is very much harder to bear than actual pain."

"Nov. 18th. I feel the same miserable feeling; and as if I hated myself, which I think is impossible for anybody really to do, as we all have a little portion of self-respect. Mother received a letter from Mrs. H——; a very nice letter, but she makes me feel like an impostor when she praises me for my goodness, because I feel as if I had no goodness about me. I do so much wish for the "Peace which passeth all understanding." I think if I had it I should not wish to live, for all our lives seem spent in trouble. Yet when you are at the point of death there seems something pleasant to live for. I very often think I should not like to live to be old, but I must remember "All our times are in His

hand ' who doeth all things well. I do hope and pray that when my time comes I may have peace. O Lord, teach me so to live that my life may be acceptable to Thee ; worthy of Thee it never can be."

" Nov. 19th. It seems very dull this morning. I wish the sun would shine. I always think November the most dreary month of the year ; the trees nearly stripped of their leaves, and what do remain, so sere and withered. The weather has such an effect upon my spirits. When the day is dreary and cold, it makes me feel the same. When it is bright and sunny I am more inclined to look at the bright side of things. It is a fortnight since we heard from F—— and S—— ; I hope we shall have a letter to-morrow. I do so often wonder when I shall be quite strong again ; when I shall again take my place in the working world. I feel a reluctance to again enter the world, as I am so afraid I may again feel a craving for its amusements, and I have had a solemn warning, of how trivial all its pleasures are, when there is but a step between ourselves and death ; when we do not know but the next hour we may be called to give an account of our stewardship, and what an account it must be if we have spent all our life in pleasure and in the service of the world."

" Nov. 23rd. The election is to-day. I hope the two Conservatives will get in."

In reading the second lesson for to-day, fifteenth chapter of St. John, I was struck with the union between Christ and His followers ; Christ comparing Himself to the vine, His disciples to the branches. If we are humble, though unworthy followers of Christ,

we must expect trouble and persecution, as He says "The servant is not above his Lord."

She wished "the two Conservatives might get in." She had a taste for politics, read the newspapers with interest, and always knew what were the leading topics of the day. Her judgment was clear. She could converse with ease and fluency, and support her arguments with reason.

"Nov. 26th. I feel so restless this morning. I do hope the restlessness will not increase during the day. I think I shall get out, the sun is shining brightly. I do so very often think, if I were but sure of going to heaven, I should not wish to live; but a great many of my thoughts are, of this earth, earthy. If it is so now I am withdrawn from the world, what will it be when I again mix with the world? The church bells are ringing beautifully. When they ring they always make me feel sad. I can re-echo the plaintive cry of the Psalmist king, 'O that I had wings like a dove, then would I flee away and be at rest.' To be at rest, free from all the cares of this world, its joys and its sorrows, always to rest in the light of a blessed Saviour's countenance. How delightful! Oh, that I could act, so that when I die I might hear the words of commendation from my Saviour, 'Well done thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things.' I am not faithful in a few things, so how can I be ruler over many things? I can only say, 'Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.' Oh, that I had the peace which Christ left as His parting gift to His disciples, 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you

not as the world giveth, give I unto you : Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.' ”

“Nov. 29th.—Advent Sunday. In one way it hardly seems a year since last Advent; in another it seems longer. Last Advent Sunday I was dangerously ill. This Advent Sunday I still continue an invalid, but with a prospect of recovery in time. It is a solemn thought that each Advent Sunday brings us nearer the second Advent, when our Lord Jesus Christ, who once visited this earth in great humility, shall come again in power and great glory to judge both the quick and the dead. In the first lesson for the morning—first chapter of Isaiah—how lovingly God calls to His people, ‘Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet I will make them as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.’ O Lord, enable me so to live, that I may be found acceptable in Thy sight. My prayers are so dead—my thoughts so wandering—my whole life so unworthy.”

And has not this been the experience of the believer in all ages? Poor doubting, trembling one, though safe in a Saviour's love, she scarcely dared to hope. Yet how highly she valued the Church's recurring Festivals the above extract will show. Though separated so long from the great congregation, she, nevertheless, joined with them in spirit, either to welcome her Lord as the Babe of Bethlehem, and look forward to that time when He shall appear, the second time with power and great glory, or to celebrate his triumphant victory over death and the grave, in the joyous Easter anthem, “Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more,

death hath no more dominion over Him." Her example had a quickening effect on her own immediate circle, leading them to prize more highly each returning holy season.

"Dec. 2nd. I felt so murmuring and wicked all yesterday, and as if I hated myself more than words can express, I thought it would have been such a good thing if I had never been born, or if it had pleased God to have taken me when I was a baby, before I could have committed any actual sin. This world is so dreary and heartless to live in. We have always to be on the look-out for dangers. I do so envy anyone that seems happy—because I never feel happy; I sometimes feel excited, sometimes a little more peaceful, but never what I understand happiness to be. When you are happy I think you feel quite contented. I always feel such an *extreme craving* for something, I don't know what, exactly—something noble—something to absorb all the pettiness of human nature—something that you can fall back upon in any time of trouble. Nothing will ever satisfy me until I can say Christ is *my* all. I am so unbelieving, I feel as if salvation were not for me. I feel too wicked—my prayers are so lifeless. And often I doubt, even, if I feel the desire. How can I expect Christ to hasten to me when that is the case. I cannot expect Him. I must throw myself upon the tender mercy of Him who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities."

About this time she wrote to her sisters:—

"My dear Sisters,—

"I was so pleased to hear from you. I suffer a great deal from my back. On Monday night I could scarcely

move one of my arms, and I very often feel so weak as if I could scarcely draw my breath or move. Mr. J—— has ordered me rum and new milk to take as soon as I wake in the morning. Mother has told you about Mrs. —— . I know it is very weak and wrong of me to mind, but I cannot help it when I suffer so much and feel so weak. Will you both pray for me that my strength and faith fail not. I do so reckon of Christmas when I shall see you both. You must take care this cold weather. Mr. J—— has attended me a year. Good-bye, darlings, and may God watch over and bless you both.

“Your affectionate Sister,

“NELLIE.”

The cod-liver oil, of which she had partaken so plentifully, had preserved her from an emaciated appearance, which was, by ignorant, though well-meaning persons, mistaken for returning health, and who, as they thought, tried to cheer her by telling her how well she looked. The person to whom she alludes in this letter was in the habit of doing so, and she had on this occasion expressed her opinion very strongly as to her looking fat and well. This to Ellen's sensitive nature was a severe trial, and often proved a strong temptation to discontinue the use of things which she said only made her fat and not strong :—

“Dec. 2nd.

“My dear S——

“I wish you many happy returns of your birthday, and I do hope you may not have the trouble I

have had. I feel rather better to-day. For the last two or three days I have felt so wretched and wicked. I can't tell you how I have felt. You don't know how pleased I shall be when Christmas comes. Give my love to dear F——, and thank her for her beautiful letter. I get out very seldom now, it is so cold. You don't know how many times I wish I was somebody else. I have not anything else to tell you. Good-bye, dear. With every wish for your happiness in this life, and in the world to come,

“I am,

“Your loving Sister,

“NELLIE.”

“Dec. 3rd. Sarah is sixteen to-day, and it is a year to-day since I was so dangerously ill. I can never forget the agony I passed through that day, both in mind and body. I did not think then that my life would be spared; but God, who is ever merciful, heard and answered the prayers that were offered up for me. O Lord, grant that I may be one of Thy children, and that when my time comes to die, I may be able to say—‘Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.’”

This was almost the last entry she was able to make. Her feebleness of body increased daily. Her outward man seemed to be giving way, whilst the immortal spirit was intensely longing for supreme happiness—a happiness not to be found on earth. Its germ had sprung up in her soul, although she failed to realise the fact, because its growth, to her own apprehension, was obstructed by the many infirmities the flesh is heir to,

and by the assaults of Satan. Nevertheless, it *was* there, and laboured to burst its bonds and expand itself in the beatific vision of the Divine presence. Her birthday, the last she was downstairs, was two days after her sister's. There was only a year's difference in their ages. In the strictest sense, they had grown together side by side. Their joys and sorrows had been pretty much the same up to the time of their separation—the one to languish in the sick chamber, the other to work a few short years and then hasten to the same heavenly home. Ellen, on this birthday, touched for the last time her pianoforte, the chords of which had often soothed her melancholy, and whispered in softest, sweetest notes, the music of the far-off land.





CHAPTER IV.

CALLING IN A PHYSICIAN—TWO YEARS' CONFINEMENT IN BED—PHASES OF THE DISEASE—CLOSE OF 1869.

AND so the days passed on, gloomy and sad they were. Saddened by many an anxious foreboding and secret whisper that the weary one was about to enter on another phase of the mysterious complaint, which had for some months been baffling the skill of her medical attendants. This secret uneasiness induced her parents to call in a physician, who was noted for his deep insight in spinal complaints. He considered her case almost hopeless, said she must lie in bed for two years and have perfect quiet, as her only chance of recovery. He found the nervous part of her back was much affected; and though naturally a man of hard exterior, he appeared moved, even to pity. Her own medical man thought it advisable that the physician's decision should be broken to her by degrees, lest her sensitive nature shrinking from the thought of so protracted a confinement, should sink under the prospect.

A fortnight had scarcely elapsed, when inflammation on

the brain was apprehended. Leeches were applied to her forehead, and her sisters, who were at home for the Christmas holidays, took an active part in nursing and tending her. For four days it was feared that each succeeding night would be her last. But she had not yet done her silent work of suffering. Her faith was not yet made perfect, and by slow degrees she rallied, and was able to enjoy the society of her brother and sisters during their remaining term at home. Her many kind friends thought it very desirable that some kind of amusement should be introduced into her room, either in the shape of a living pet, or any thing, which would, without fatigue, beguile the lonely hours which stretched out before her. A parrot was tried, but its noisy screams rather wearied, than amused her and it had to be removed. A pet dog was tried but with the same effect. The children of the family took turns in waiting upon her daily. In them she took a deep interest and their childish ways amused her, whilst she was ever ready to "pour instruction on the mind." It was both pleasing and instructive to hear her convey lessons in Divine things to their young and tender minds. She had a happy facility in communicating knowledge and the rich fund of information she possessed made those older than herself feel how much they too could learn from those patient lips. And they on their part lost no opportunity of communicating to her, any little incident of interest in their daily life. She was constantly receiving letters from the absent ones of their daily doings. In a letter from one of them about this time, the writer gives a minute and interesting account of a visit he had just paid to a coal mine. All these things served to draw her out of herself and afforded her sub-

jects for thought and conversation, so that her sick room lost none of its *prestige* for cheerfulness and a tolerable share of domestic comfort.

Her doctor thought that a knowledge of her real position ought to be broken to her by degrees ; but it so happened that in conversing with one of the members of her family, he told her that the physician had said she must lie in bed for two years. If this communication had a depressing effect upon her she did not manifest it in any 'other way than by a gentle remonstrance, "*Why* did you not tell me, mother?" And a day or two after, with the utmost composure and cheerfulness she desired that all her belongings might be brought to her room and superintended their arrangement for putting away until she should want them ; but her secret impression was, as she afterwards said, that she never should want them. May it not have been that—

" Hands of invisible spirits touch'd the strings
Of that mysterious instrument the soul,
And played the prelude of her fate.
She heard the voice prophetic "

And she owned its power.

Ellen was fond of poetry, and her special favourite was the "*Lyra Anglicana*," a book which her brother had sent her as a birthday present. She could soon quote many of the poems which were in unison with her own feelings, as the following :—

" He liveth long who liveth well—
All other life is short and vain—
He liveth longest who can tell
Of living most for heavenly gain.

He liveth long who liveth well—
 All else is being flung away—
 He liveth longest who can tell
 Of true things truly done each day.
 Waste not thy being ; back to Him
 Who freely gave it, freely give ;
 Else is that being but a dream,
 'Tis but to be, and not to live.
 Be wise, and use thy wisdom well—
 Who wisdom speaks, must live it too—
 He is the wisest, who can tell
 How first he *lived*, then *spoke* the True.
 Be what thou seemest ; live thy creed ;
 Hold up to earth the torch Divine ;
 Be what thou prayest to be made ;
 Let the great Master's steps be thine.
 Fill up each hour with what will last ;
 Buy up the moments as they go ;
 The life above, when this is past,
 Is the ripe fruit of life below ;
 Sow Truth, if thou the Truth wouldst reap,
 Who sows the false, shall reap the vain ;
 Erect and sound thy conscience keep ;
 From hollow words and deeds refrain.
 Sow love and taste its fruitage pure ;
 Sow praise and reap its harvest bright ;
 Sow sunbeams on the rock and moor,
 And find a harvest home of light."

Often in the quietude of evening, with countenance
 calm as the fading sky, would she repeat the above
 sweet poem and these also :—

" All unseen the Master walketh
 By the toiling worker's side,
 Comfortable words He speaketh,
 While His hands uphold and guide.

Grief, nor pain, nor any sorrow
Rends thy heart to Him unknown ;
He to-day and He to-morrow
Grace sufficient gives His own.
Holy strivings nerve and strengthen,
Long endurance wins the crown ;
When the evening shadows lengthen,
Thou shalt lay thy burden down."

"GOING HOME."

"They are going—only going,
Jesus called them long ago ;
All the wintry time they're passing
Softly as the falling snow.
When the violets in the springtime
Catch the azure of the sky,
They are carried out to slumber
Sweetly where the violets lie.

"They are going—only going,
When with summer earth is dressed,
In their cold hands holding roses,
Folded to each silent breast.
When the autumn hangs red banners
Out above the harvest sheaves,
They are going—ever going—
Thick and fast, like falling leaves.

"All along the mighty ages
All adown the solemn time,
They have taken up their homeward
March to that serene clime,
Where the watching, waiting angels
Lead them from the shadows dim,
To the brightness of his presence,
Who has called them unto Him.

"They are going—only going
Out of pain and into bliss ;
Out of sad and sinful weakness
Into perfect holiness.
Snowy brows—no care shall shade them,
Bright eyes tears shall never dim,
Rosy lips no time shall fade them,
Jesus called them unto Him.

"Little hearts for ever stainless,
Little hands as pure as they,
Little feet, by angels guided,
Never a forbidden way.
They are going—ever going,
Leaving many a lonely spot ;
But 'tis Jesus who has called them—
Suffer, and forbid them not."

Before her illness she had not cared for poetry ; now, however, it seemed the easiest and most natural way of conveying concisely and fully her own deep feelings. She was well acquainted with most of our English poets, and could give some of their finest passages a striking and impressive emphasis. These renderings, however, were only for the ears of her dearest friends ; and doubtless it was this happy facility in turning to the best account the intercourse of daily life, which made her sick chamber, not, as is too frequently the case, a place of gloom, but a very haven of rest. Thus, whilst she was lamenting her own uselessness and unprofitableness, she was often, unknown to herself, strengthening the weak hands and comforting the downcast hearts of her beloved ones. And they, on their part, strove to render her isolation less severe by bringing into her chamber as much of the doings of the

outer world as her strength would bear. Her room was well supplied with flowers, in their season. Watching their arrangement, and offering a suggestion now and then as to the proper blending of colour, served to give a turn to her thoughts and wile away a weary hour. A few extracts from the correspondence of this period will serve to show the power of bodily disease over the soul, weakening its perceptions, and hiding from it—alas ! too often—the sense of the Divine presence.

“ March 13th, 1869.

“ My darling Nellie,—

“ I am so grieved to hear you are so ill again. Miss L—— is too, and so depressed, she told me last night she thought she had never been so much so before. So you see you have a fellow-sufferer. Mother told me how very miserable you are, darling. Of course, you don't mind me knowing about it. I know you would like to think that at some particular time prayers were being offered up to God for you even by a very imperfect, unworthy person. For this reason, every day, at a quarter to one, you may think that I am praying for you. How well fitted for you are to-day's Psalms ? I felt as if I were saying one of them for you. 'Save me, O God ; for the waters are come in, even unto my soul.' 'Hear me, O God, in the multitude of Thy mercy : even in the truth of Thy Salvation.' 'Take me out of the mire, that I sink not : O let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.' 'Let not the water-flood drown me, neither let the deep swallow me up : and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.' 'Hear me, O Lord, for Thy loving kindness is comfort-

able; turn Thee unto me according to the multitude of Thy mercies.' 'And hide not Thy face from Thy servant, for I am in trouble: O haste Thee and hear me.' 'Draw nigh unto my soul, and save it: O deliver me, because of mine enemies.' 'Thou hast known my reproof, my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries are all in Thy sight.' 'Thy rebuke hath broken my heart; I am full of heaviness: I looked for some to have pity on me, but there was no man, neither found I any to comfort me.'

"I have copied the following extract for you from 'The way of the Cross in temptation.' 'Save me, O God, for the waters are come in even unto my soul.' 'Behold, all is desolation within me, trouble, and terror, and dimness of anguish, and I shall be driven to darkness; for I am torn, as it were, from the stronghold of my hopes, and cast out to perish in a very wilderness of gloom, where thou art not, and *where I have not even power to seek Thee*. Woe is me, I am undone, undone; for it seems a very mockery to call on Thee, when faith is dead within my soul. Behold the light is darkened in the very heavens where I thought to find Thee, and I see nought in all this bewilderment but hell, with ready fires desiring my lost soul, and death preparing soon to lead me into it."

(*Divine Master.*) "Peace be still; be still, and know that I am God! Wherefore art thou so terrified and sore dismayed? If I am for thee, who shall be against thee? Am I not He that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth. I am thy light and thy salvation, whom, then, shalt thou fear? I am the strength of thy life, of whom, then, shalt thou be afraid? Faint not, therefore, but hold fast thy con-

fidence unto the end ; tell me, what means this sudden agony ? Pour out thy heart before me ; open to me all thy sorrow, and doubt not that I will give thee the blessing of peace."

The child then goes on to describe most fearful temptations to horrible blasphemies, and ends his complaint with these words :—"The sorest agony in all my trial is the terror, never quitting me by night or day, that I shall perish through this deep temptation from before Thy face for ever ; it seemeth awful unto me to think that I may be tormented by this bitter dread unto the last ; this, then, only would I say, must the shadow of this great despair pursue me even to the death, as oftentimes I forebode with anguish. (Divine Master) : My child, thy Father hath given unto thy hands the cup of trembling, and if He will that thou shouldest drink it to the dregs, ask not that it should pass from thee. I bid thee leave the times and seasons of thy trial to His almighty love, prepared, if need be, to endure this cross with patience, even unto death ; and that thou mayest have deeper courage to do so, remember this, that he of all my blessed saints who was the first to win the martyr's crown died *kneeling* ; and in like manner be thou all content to die, if such be my good pleasure, *praying without hope* ; and lo, it may be in that hour that, looking up to eternity, thy opening eyes shall see the glory of God, and me, even Jesus, standing at his right hand." The fellow-sufferer above named sent her this prayer :—"O, Father in heaven, grant me, thy poor child, entire conformity to Thy holy will ; let me learn perfectly each and every lesson this long trial is to teach me. Make me to resign altogether the issues

of my sickness to Thee. Help me to cease to long, either by death or recovery, for the absence of my daily portion of pain; fill me with the certainty that there is not one throb of suffering too many, not one which Thy love would not have spared me had there not have been the needs be. Then, O my God, for time and for eternity I shall be thine, and the work Thou would'st have wrought in me, being at last perfected, I shall by virtue of Thine own promise dwell with Thee, where all is peace and rest, through my own sweet Saviour's merits, and for His dear sake. Amen."

"TWELVE RAYS FROM GOD'S SUN FOR MY DARK
HOURS."

1. "God is love."
2. "As thy days so shall thy strength be."
3. "When I am in heaviness I will think upon God."
4. "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them."
5. "My times are in Thy hand."
6. "My grace is sufficient for thee."
7. "In your patience possess ye your souls."
8. "All things work together for good to them that love God."
9. "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength."
10. "He giveth medicine to heal their sickness."
11. "Come unto Me all that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will refresh you."
12. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

The last letter Ellen wrote was to her sister for her twenty-first birthday. It was written in pencil, and took four days to perform it. The characters were very tremulous and scarcely legible. We insert it, as it shows the power which some diseases exercise, not only on the body but also on the mind, weakening the former and intercepting the bright shining of the Father's face on the latter, causing it oftentimes to say with its suffering Redeemer, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death. Watch with me,"

"Wednesday, 1869.

"My darling F——,

"It seems such a long time since I saw you and Sarah. How have you been in every way? (Thursday). I received your letter this morning; am so sorry you are so poorly. My back has pained me much lately, and I don't feel to have much use in my hands. I do feel so miserable. I wish you were at home. How are Miss L—— and G. S——? Give my love to Miss L——. I can't write more than a line or two at a time without having pain. (Friday). B—— went for her music lesson yesterday. (Saturday). I must finish my letter this morning, and wish you very many happy returns of your birthday. I don't know what to tell you, and my hand trembles so. Good-bye dear; much love to both.

"Your loving Sister,

"NELLIE."

The next letter refers to the death of a young person,

for whose spiritual welfare Ellen and her sisters had felt great concern :—

“ Aug. 17, 1869.

“ My dear Nellie,—

“ We were very much startled to hear of M. A——’s death, for we both thought she would have languished for several weeks longer. I felt very thankful and relieved, too, to hear that she had died so happily, wishing with you that I was with her ; but I think we should be careful how we cherish such a wish, for it may spring only from a desire to escape the miseries and trials of this world, and be at rest. Rather should we be content to live our own allotted time, bearing with patience all the troubles and trials God sees fit to send us, remembering that it is ‘ out of much tribulation ’ we enter into the Kingdom of God. Last Sunday was Mr. D——’s last Sunday at St. John’s. There was an early celebration. I went to it. I cannot tell you how much I enjoyed it. I think I have never realised before the blessedness of really and truly partaking of Christ’s ‘ body ’ and ‘ blood,’ and knowing that He is as truly present as if we could see Him with our natural eye. God bless and keep you, darling.

“ Your loving Sister,

“ SARAH.”

During the six weeks’ harvest vacation this year I never left her, and sweet and profitable were the hours we spent together in her sick chamber. A note from the journal runs thus :—

Sept. 20th. E—— gets no better. One day better, another day worse, appears to be her maximum of health. May we be enabled to rest upon the precious assurance, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." I have felt it a great privilege to watch beside her sick-bed these holidays. Many—very many—times I have been the learner, she the teacher. She has still occasional attacks of mental depression, when her soul walks in darkness, being harassed by tormenting fear and overwhelmed by a horrible dread, a certain proof that the brain suffers. Yet her general conversation and tone of character give evidence that she is indeed a child of God. Her mind has attained a maturity of thought far surpassing her years.

On Sunday evening she asked me what I understood by the "Communion of Saints," adding that she thought every word of the Apostle's Creed was so full of meaning, and regretted that it was so often repeated in a careless and irreverent manner, without regard to its fulness. Yesterday she said she had been much struck with this from one of the lessons for the day. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive;" also with this, "Far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." She remarked that "When to *ourselves* our prayers seem unanswered, it was not so, they were answered just in the way best for us." She is gradually losing her hold of life, and has often said lately, she does not anxiously wish to live. The thought has often suggested itself to me lately, that the earthly tabernacle is slowly, yet surely, giving way,

whilst the immortal spirit is ripening for glory. It is a great mercy that her judgment remains clear, and her memory retentive. She is a most agreeable companion, and her sick-room is often a haven of rest to my weary spirit."

Soon after this her family were visited with scarlet fever. Two of its members had a sharp attack, which, for several weeks, threw the whole family into a state of anxious suspense. A bitter ingredient in this new cup of sorrow was, to Ellen, the loss of her sisters' companionship during the Michaelmas vacation. And as the fever hovered about the house for many weeks, serious doubts were entertained as to whether it would be safe to receive them even at Christmas. In allusion to it, she said, "I cannot bear even to think of it. I feel I *must* see them at Christmas." It was her last Christmas on earth! Did something within whisper that it would be her last? If so, what was that something? was it not—

"That gentle voice we hear,
Soft as the breath of even,
That checks each fault, that calms each fear,
And speaks of Heaven?"

One of her cherished sisters wrote as follows: "— May our Father grant you grace, Ellen darling, to bear up under any circumstances. It is evident we have none of us yet learnt the lesson of submission to a higher will. Oh, if only we could say in our anguish, as our Saviour did, 'If this cup may not pass from us except we drink it, Thy will be done.' Truly the night is dark, but soon shall the darkness be dispelled. One

glance at the glorious face of Christ shall gild every black cloud with heavenly brightness. Our Great High Priest is even now touched with our sorrows, for hath He not borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows? Yes, surely! not a sigh escapes one of us but ascends up to Him, the man of sorrows. . . . We must look forward to Christmas. If we are spared to see it, it will be all the brighter for being half-a-year instead of a quarter. . . . It seems to me that your work will be to comfort the rest, if only by cheerful looks, albeit they come from a sinking heart, and by your gentle, loving ways. It is hard work, I know, to keep from murmuring and worrying, but what we cannot do in our own strength we can and will do in the strength of Christ Jesus. Angels, I believe, are appointed to minister to us in distress, as they did to our Blessed Lord himself. I hope you will like this hymn—

“THE LOVE OF THE CROSS.”

“ ‘ Jesus, refuge of the weary,
Object of the Spirit's love ;
Fountain in life's desert dreary,
Saviour from the world above.

“ ‘ O, how oft thine eyes offended,
Gaze upon the sinner's fall ;
Yet Thou on the Cross extended,
Bore the penalty for all.

“ ‘ Yet no vow repentant breathing,
Still we pass Thy sacred Cross ;
Though 'neath thorns Thy forehead wreathing,
Dropped the bloody sweat for us.

Yet Thy sinless death hath brought us
Life eternal, peace and rest ;
What Thy grace alone has taught us
Calms the sinner's stormy breast.

As the autumn advanced, and as Ellen had now lain in bed nearly a year without any apparent improvement, her doctor thought it desirable to vary the mode of treatment. A fresh application was tried, and its constant use seemed to induce a small increase of strength; so her friends thought, and she was also placed on the sofa in a reclining position for a few minutes every day, and once she was set in an easy chair, in order, if possible, to gain the use of her legs and feet; but the shock caused such utter exhaustion that it was never repeated. Another medical man, who had been before consulted, gave it as his opinion that all these symptoms were unfavourable, indicating disease of the spine and brain, leaving little hope of ultimate recovery. Still her friends continued to hope against hope, and on her birthday Sarah wrote as follows:—

“ My darling Nellie,—

“ Another year has rolled away, and God has spared you to see another birthday. May He in His mercy raise you up to see *many* more happy birthdays. I know it must be a great trial to you to lie so helpless in bed and to see others so full of activity around you. This verse in the Evening Psalm for your birthday must be a comfort to you, ‘ O tarry thou the Lord’s leisure; be strong, and He shall comfort thine heart, and put thou thy trust in the Lord.’ Thank mother for her beautiful letter, and you for your kind wishes. I think,

indeed, that the past year has been a very eventful one with me, and I have a very great deal to be thankful for. My only fear is that I have not improved my privileges as I might have done. I have very little spare time now, it is all taken up with my French. My love to all, and accept the warmest yourself, from

“Your affectionate Sister,

“SARAH.”

The coming Christmas reunited her to those she so dearly loved, and its weeks passed away with less anxiety than the former Christmas vacation had done. Her languishing weakness had become a piece of family property which they hoped at some distant period would be laid aside, and a comfortable measure of health take its place. Towards the close of the holidays Sarah had commenced carrying her about the room for a few minutes every day, which she appeared to bear very well. She could also bear talking and reading with much less inconvenience, so that the vacation passed pleasantly away, and the close of her last year on earth sank peacefully into its grave.

CHAPTER V.

CHANGES, 1870.

As the calm and cloudless morning frequently ushers in the noontide storm, and as the ocean's glassy, smooth, and rippleless breast is often the prelude of the coming storm, so was Ellen's apparent improvement in health. All serene and quiet, and as the silent prayer ascended to the throne, borne by the angel, in the "golden censer," she passed the boundary line of 1869; but ere 1870 had sped but a little way on his mission, she had passed the boundary of time, and had launched on the boundless ocean of a blissful eternity. Early on one of the January mornings her sisters were obliged to return to their respective spheres of work, and she desired to be awake on purpose that they might have breakfast in her room, so that she might enjoy their society to the very last. How sweet and tender is the link which binds the hearts of those together who are already bound to Christ. Although she keenly felt this separation, yet, with her usual fortitude she bore it well. But the shadow of the great change was hastening on, and we find "(Jan. 30th), Dear Ellen is not nearly so well.

During the week, I have carried her about the room for a few minutes every day. To-day she was unable to be moved."

"Feb. 7th. After a week of sickness and exhaustion, her doctor finds that our darling's right lung is giving way. The cough has become most troublesome, and every symptom indicates the taking down of the earthly tabernacle. We feel the blow severely—our hopes are crushed. One of the family writes thus—"No one would be more pleased than I should, to see you out once more; but if it be not God's will to restore you at present, we must try to bear it with patient resignation, knowing that 'whatever is, is for the best,' and so we must live in hope that, although now we only see the black side of the cloud, we shall, if we wait patiently, in time attain to the full view of its silver lining." And again,—“Your dear suffering form is always before me, and sometimes I can fancy the touch of your poor, thin hand. But in suffering there is one grand consolation, the more you suffer, the nearer do you approach in reality our Blessed Lord. Those who have had a bright life can only reverence His agonies, such as you can *feel* with Him, and know that, for a blessed certainty, He feels for you. Pitying, loving Jesus, our Brother, our Friend, our Saviour, who prayed for us, even when the time of His dread Passion was close at hand, who, now, is ever interceding for us, who casts out none. Who looks on all with infinite love. He, even He, has felt every pang of pain that tortures your dear frame, and says for you, O Father, if this cup may not pass away from her except she drink it, give her grace to say, "Not my will, but Thine, be done." I often think of that blind

woman who said that she should welcome sight that she might see Christ. With what a loving smile will He welcome the *Redeemed*! What glad sounds will ring through Heaven when by our Saviour we shall be presented to the Father as *one* of the multitude which no man can number, whose robes have been washed white in the blood of the Lamb! To the love and care of the Saviour, who never changeth, neither is weary, I commend you, my dearest sister, in fullest confidence and trusting faith, that in your hour of present need *His* will be the arm which supports your weary head. *His* will be the cheering voice crying, 'Peace, be still;' 'Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.'"

"Feb. 12th.

"My darling Sister,—

"We were so grieved to hear that you were suffering so much from sickness and exhaustion; but we know that these earthly sufferings work out for us a *far more exceeding* and an *eternal* weight of glory. I went to S—— Church last Sunday morning, and enjoyed it so much. May God bless and strengthen you, darling, to bear whatever He thinks fit to send. Give my best love to all, and with my dearest love to you,

"I am,

"Your loving Sister,

"SARAH."

"Feb. 13th. — *Sunday*. Dear Ellen has conversed sweetly to-day, so far as the cough and weakness would permit her to do so, about heaven and heavenly things. Her mind seems calm and serene, resting upon Jesus alone for salvation.

17th. The doctor fears our dear child cannot rally this time. The cause which irritated the spine appears to be affecting the lungs, and the probability is that she will gradually sink. She had a frightful attack of exhaustion this evening, and for some minutes we thought the end was come. By and bye she whispered, "Tell me what F—— said 'When thou passest through the waters,'" &c. After the paroxysm had abated, she talked freely about her approaching dissolution. The fear of death, thanks be to God, has subsided. She begged that after her death I would not grieve because I had not sooner removed her from her work. She spoke of herself as a sinner, saying she was not worthy to be classed with St. Paul as the "chief of sinners," she was *more* than the "chief of sinners." She said, "I never have been so sanguine about my own recovery as some persons have been, and during the last few weeks I have longed to die." Then alluding to myself, she added, "that the separation would only be short, that *one* must go first, and that she thought she should not be left alone in death." I assured her she would not, that He remained faithful who had promised "I will be with thee." Then reading, "For now we see through a glass darkly, but *then* face to face; *now* I know in part, but *then* shall I know even as also I am known;" and commending her to God in prayer, she sank to rest. "So He giveth His beloved sleep."

About this time she received in a letter the following very beautiful lines, written by George Withers, an early English poet :—

“ Till from the straw, the flail doth beat the corn,
Until the chaff be purged from the wheat,
Yea, till the mill the grains in pieces tear,
The richness of the flour will scarce appear.

“ So, till men's persons great afflictions touch,
If worth be found, their worth is not so much,
Because like wheat in straw, they have not yet
That value which in thrashing they may get.

“ For till the bruising flails of God's corrections
Have thrashed out of us our vain affections ;
Till these corruptions which do misbecome us
Are by Thy Sacred Spirit winnowed from us.

“ Until from us the straw of worldly treasures,
Till all the dusty chaff of empty pleasures,
Yea, till this flail upon us He doth lay,
To thrash the husk of this our flesh away,

“ And leave the soul uncovered ; nay, yet more,
Till God shall make our spirit poor,
We shall not up to highest wealth aspire,
But then we shall ; and that is my desire.”

The friend who sent these verses then adds :—
“ These lines seem to me to teach one the very mystery
of suffering, of tribulation, of God's thrashing of us ;
and to show us a reason why we should endure them,
not with patience only, but even with thankfulness,
since we know that it is only the full ear, rich with
corn, that is worth thrashing, and therefore it seems to

me that we ought to be unspeakably thankful that we are worth the thrashing, more particularly if, as in your case, the thrashing be continued, for it shows there is still a store of good grain to be brought to light."

Could affection have lifted the weight of suffering and sorrow from the beloved and sinking form, how often would it have done so ; nevertheless, it did what it could to alleviate and soothe the stricken one. "I have copied the enclosed entirely for *you*, darling," wrote her absent sister.

"Cheered onward by the promise sure ;
Strong in the faith entire and pure,
Thou dost profess.
Depart, thy hope is certainty ;
The third, the better life on high
Shalt thou possess.

"O death—no more, no more delay ;
My spirit longs to flee away
And be at rest.
The will of heaven my will shall be ;
I bow to the Divine decree—
To God's behest.

"My soul is ready to depart.
No thought rebels ; the obedient heart
Breathes forth no sigh ;
The wish on earth to linger still
Were vain, when 'tis God's sovereign will
That we shall die.

"O Thou, that for our sins didst take
A human form, and humbly make
Thy home on earth ;
Thou that to Thy Divinity
A human nature didst ally
By mortal birth ;

"And in that form didst suffer here
Torment, and agony, and fear
So patiently ;
By Thy redeeming grace alone,
And not for merits of my own,
Oh ! pardon me."

"Feb. 22nd, Our beloved child suffers on pretty much the same. To-night she was able to talk, and it was very touching to hear her allude to the many trials of her past short life ; remarking that "the length of her *real, actual* life had gone far beyond eighteen years," that her "overwrought feelings" had often induced an irritability of temper at home, she could not help ; but which she now so much regretted, adding most pathetically. "For my sake, shew kindness and do good to——" mentioning by name those who had caused her much mental suffering. She further expressed a strong sense of her own sinfulness and unworthiness, saying, that St. Paul's "chief of sinners" was not enough for her, she felt she was "the chiefest of sinners." I pointed her to the precious blood-shedding, and reminded her of the tenderness and compassion of Him who laid upon Jesus the iniquities of His people, bearing them into a land of forgetfulness, and read from Psalm 103, "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For he knoweth our frame ; He remembereth that we are dust." And after prayer was offered her mind became calm. Sarah wrote :—

"My dear Nellie,—

"I felt I could not let the letters go home without

sending you a few lines. I have also sent you two pieces of poetry which, I know, you will like very much. I think the verse 'If thou wouldst reap in love,' &c., is especially beautiful, I felt so wretched the other morning. I thought I was fit for nothing, and suddenly these words came into my mind, 'The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.' I could not think where they came from, but they comforted me wonderfully.

"Accept my fondest love,

"Your loving Sister,

"SARAH."

"Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward,"
Job. v., 7.

"Art thou a child of tears,
Cradled in care and woe,
And seems it hard thy vernal years
Few vernal joys can show?

"And fall the sounds of mirth
Sad in thy lonely heart,
From all the hopes and charms of earth
Untimely called to part.

"Look here and hold thy peace;
The Giver of all good
E'en from the tomb takes no release,
From suffering, tears, and blood.

"If thou wouldst reap in love,
First sow in holy fear;
So life a winter's morn may prove,
To a bright endless year.

"We with the heavenly host,
Praise, honour, and adore
The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
One God for evermore."

"IT IS WELL"—2 Kings, iv., 26.

"Beloved it is well,
God's ways are always right ;
And love is o'er them all,
Though far above our sight.

"Beloved it is well,
Though deep and sore the smart,
He wounds, who knows and cares,
To heal the broken heart.

"Beloved it is well,
Though grief benight our way,
'Twill make the joy more dear,
That comes with dawning day.

"Beloved it is well
The path that Jesus trod,
Though rough and dark it be,
Leads home to heaven and God."

The following extract was sent her about the same time by a fellow-sufferer :—

"Our Lord, in making your career a career of suffering, has called you even by this very means to unite you closely to Himself. You must oblige yourself to believe this, for the more your heart is able to enter into this secret, the more you will feel your sorrows changed into ineffable consolations. The only real earthly joy is that which is derived from the Cross, and this joy is only now at the price of a complete death to ourselves, so that we may live entirely in God and by Him. Sacrifice is an indispensable condition of the Christian life

and its plenitude is to be only reached by entire immolation. They who think otherwise are deceived; but this is a truth which can only be entered into by the heart; love alone makes it fruitful. The Cross must be loved before we can understand all the excellencies the Cross contains. Fearful as it may be to the sight of nature, it will be divinely transformed in the arms of those who know how to hold it in a loving grasp. Beg then, my daughter, beg earnestly of our Lord to bestow on you still greater and greater love for His Cross and for your own. Understand that your Cross is His, because it is for love of Him you carry it, and understand that His Cross is yours, because it was for love of you that He bore it; it was for love of you that He died in unimaginable sorrows. It was the infinite love which he bore to our souls which condemned Him to suffer the torments of His passion. And it is through love, only through love, that we must accept our own sufferings as the means of attaining to perfect union with Him. What is very difficult to the rich and learned is made easy to the poor and humble, because the simple acceptance of their condition introduces them into the pathway of safety and joy. And you, my child, forgotten and always suffering, are evidently called by God, and that in an especial manner, to be the disciple of the Divine Cross. Your happiness will never be found in freedom from pain, but only in entire and holy resignation, and the closest union with Him who has suffered for your sake."

"Feb. 20th. The days pass anxiously on, our darling child is suffering much and growing weaker. Her doctor thinks that a fit of paralysis may come on at any

time, or she may lie for some weeks as she is now. The Lord only knows."

The absent members of her family were made acquainted with her real state, and also her yearning, if the Lord permitted, to see them once more. Accordingly on Ash Wednesday the beloved ones once more assembled around the sick bed to comfort, to the best of their power, their darling sister.

The next day was the last they *all* spent together on earth, and at parting Ellen gave to Sarah a snowdrop as a remembrancer—an emblem pure of *that* Resurrection morning, when, in white-robed purity, the saints shall rise to everlasting felicity.

March 4th. For the sixth time during her illness, our dear Ellen received the Holy Communion. Myself and T—— received with her—she was too weak to have more communicants. During the celebration a few tears coursed down her pale face, that was the only emotion perceptible. Previously she had been harassed she said "with blasphemous thoughts," and it was with difficulty I tried to convince her that temptation was not sin as *she* thought, but that the sin lay only in the yielding to temptation, and directed her to look to the Lord Jesus Christ, who was in *all* points tempted like as we are, and was therefore able to succour those who are tempted. We felt it was the last time our dear one would partake of "those holy mysteries," and our Blessed Lord's own words came forcibly to the mind, "I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Later in the evening she became restless and much worse. The sickness returned with

great violence, and a "horrible dread again overwhelmed" her. "Deep called unto deep." "It was now dark and Jesus was not yet come." In her anguish she clung to her brother, begging him not to leave her till she died. It was most harrowing to hear her repeated cries of "My God have pity upon me—my God have mercy upon me—O my God give me patience." This mental distress lasted for several hours, and the sickness and exhaustion seemed to baffle the powers of medicine. Doubtless the strain of the two preceding days, coupled with the harassing temptation she had had previously to the Holy Communion, had been too much for her brain, already weakened by disease, and the arch enemy took advantage of it to harass her still further. It was a night of deep anxiety, and many earnest prayers were offered up to God for her. As morning dawned the distress of mind subsided, and the bodily symptoms were slightly relieved, although she continued to suffer much throughout the day. Her sister, in writing, said, "There are two or three verses in one of to-day's Psalms which I would read you if I were with you." "For Thou shalt prevent him with the blessings of goodness, and shalt set a crown of pure gold upon his head. For Thou shalt give him everlasting felicity, and make him glad with the joy of Thy countenance." And why? "Because the king putteth his trust in the Lord, and in the mercy of the Most Highest he shall not miscarry." "My darling, would that I could bear your suffering for you! I can only say—

"Cling to the Mighty One,
Cling in thy grief :
Cling to the Holy one,
He gives relief.

Cling to the Gracious One,
Cling in thy pain,
Cling to the Faithful One,
He will sustain.

“Cling to the Pardoning One,
He speaketh peace.
Cling to the Healing One,
Anguish shall cease.”

“I think you will like this”—

“When my tongue no more can utter
Either prayer or psalm,
Then O give my spirit longing
For thy blissful calm.

“When the last faint sigh is breath'd,
Ope Thy door of peace,
Bid my watchful guardian angel,
His white wings unfurl,
Bid him bear my quaking spirit,
Softly, softly home.”

“Home to the angel band,
Home where no shadows fall,
Home to the golden strand,
Home to the Monarch's hall;
Home from the risk of harm,
Home to the land of rest,
Home to my Father's arm,
Home to my Saviour's breast.”

“Yes, darling, home—home, the soul's true home.
Rest, perfect rest. No pain, no temptation, no flesh
warring against the spirit. May our Saviour have you
in His peaceful keeping now and ever.”

"March 6th. Our darling is still combating with the waves of sorrow and affliction. In reply to the question, How did she feel? she said, "I am distressed in body and harassed in mind." Again she was pointed to Christ, the only true source of comfort. Again did the earnest prayer ascend to the mercy-seat that it might please God of His infinite mercy for Christ's sake to give her relief from these distressing and harassing temptations. She attributes them all to her "own wickedness," and writes bitter things against herself. She said, "When the sickness commenced the other day, I thought, if the cough continued, a vessel must give way; not that I should have minded if I had only felt peaceful. But I fear the bad thoughts will never leave me." I replied, "Your thoughts are not in themselves sin, and your striving against them is a mark in your favour. Doubtless they will leave you before death. He who has 'begun a good work' in you will not leave it incomplete." "But Fanny Bickersteith was never so harassed as I am." "Yes, dear, she was," and I read some passages from her life which shewed that she had had precisely the same trial; and then turned to Zech. xiv., 6, 7, and read, "And it shall come to pass in that day that the light shall not be clear nor dark. But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day nor night. But it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light." Nothing could have been more applicable to Ellen's present state than this touching description of the Lord's dealings with His people. The light "*was not clear*," had it been so, she would have rejoiced in God her Saviour. But she was for a time like one enveloped in mist, who "gropeth at noonday," scarcely

being able to realise in this "darkling day" that she was "*known to the Lord.*" But He, faithful to His promise, as the shades of evening came on, caused the light to shine, and she was enabled to rejoice in the prospect of death.

Sarah wrote :—

"My darling Nellie,

"I am so sorry to hear that you are again so troubled in mind. I was thinking of you when I was reading the second lesson the other day, where Jesus said to Peter, 'Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.' I thought it was full of comfort for you, for Jesus is the 'same yesterday, and to day, and for ever,' and prays for you, too, that your strength fail not; and I am sure that you will overcome and at last be made perfect through suffering. Oh! darling, I cannot see you; but what a comfort it is I can pray for you. I went to St. Matthew's last Wednesday evening, and enjoyed it so much. We had one of my favourite hymns, which has been a comfort to me many a time. I dare say you know it :—

"Oh, let him whose sorrow
No relief can find,
Trust in God, and borrow
Ease for heart and mind.

"Where the mourner weeping
Sheds the secret tear,
God His watch is keeping,
Though none else is near.

“ God will never leave thee,
All thy wants He knows,
Feels the pains that grieve thee
Sees thy cares and woes.

“ Raise thine eyes to Heaven
When thy spirits quail,
When by tempests driven,
Heart and courage fail.

“ When in grief we languish
He will dry the tear,
Who His children's anguish
Soothes with succour near.

“ All our woe and sadness
In this world below,
Balance not the gladness
We in Heaven shall know.

“ Jesu, holy Saviour,
In the realms above,
Crown us with Thy favour,
Fill us with Thy love.’

“ Don't think me long before I write. I am so busy, and don't know how to get all my work in. It is now nearly ten o'clock, and I have not had a minute's recreation all day. Give my love to all. God bless you, darling.

“ Your loving Sister,

“ SARAH.”

CHAPTER VI.

FLUCTUATIONS.

DEATH, which for the last few days had seemed so near, now appeared to recede and leave his victim a little longer in the earthly loving arms. Her weakness was most overpowering, scarcely permitting her to speak for hours together. In intervals of comparative ease, she loved to have her daily portion of the Bread of Life dealt out to her, and join in the earnest prayers which were offered up for her, and to speak of that better land, on the shores of which her weary feet were now treading. What sleep she had was mostly induced by opiates, but there was a calm quiet rested on her features, except when the mental darkness reigned, which showed that there was a "hope which maketh not ashamed," sweet prelude of the everlasting peace which she was shortly to inherit. The closing threads of her suffering life will be best unravelled by again recurring to the daily journal.

March 8th. Our darling is extremely weak to night, though, altogether, she has been [more comfortable in health to-day. We (her parents) are going to divide

the nights between us to watch beside her. May He who giveth His beloved sleep grant her a portion."

"March 10th. It has been a day of anxiety. Our beloved E——'s weakness has been extreme. It is very surprising how she holds out from day to day. The fever runs high, the pulse very quick, the constant cough, and the night sweats, all indicate that the earthly tabernacle is fast giving way. She has expressed great satisfaction and thankfulness in having been permitted to have me by her side all day. She has been talking this evening of what it would be "to see Christ, to be free from temptation, to be free from sin." Yes, and rest assured that He who hath begun a good work in you will surely carry it on to the end. She replied, "Yes, I have never lost my trust." Shortly after she alluded to an earlier stage of her illness, in which she said she was "like the Church at Laodicea, 'luke-warm,' just satisfying her conscience, no more." I tried to relieve the look of distress by remarking yes, darling, but then comes in the cleansing blood. You have looked peaceful to-day, have not been so much harassed by those distressing thoughts. "No, but I am never entirely free from them." Well, it is partly the weakness of your poor brain that causes them, and they do not alter your safety in Christ. "I hope I shall not be afraid to die." No, I trust dying strength will be given. "Have you seen many die?" No, darling, only two; but I do not think it is a painful thing to die. It seems to me to be more a sinking to rest of worn-out nature. She then asked me to read to her the closing days of F. B——, and inquired how long it wanted to Easter,

and on being told a month, said, "How long does Mr. J—— think this will last?" "He cannot tell; it will greatly depend upon the support you are able to take. He apprehends another phase in the disease." "What?" "Paralysis." "Then I should not suffer; but I fear not. I think I shall have to suffer." "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." After a pause. "I should like to see T. F—— and S—— again. I hope I shall."

"12th. Our dear E—— had an almost sleepless night. About seven o'clock this morning she wished to have the second lesson for the day read. Our Lord's promise to the penitent thief seemed strikingly appropriate—"To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." As sleep did not come, she asked to have the remaining part of F. B. read to her. Then, as the cough permitted, she talked about herself, and, amongst other things, said,— "My doubts have not been so much as to whether I have come to Christ, as the wicked thoughts which have troubled me about God, and especially about the Holy Ghost." Again, directing her to the only true source of comfort, the Lord Jesus Christ, the coming glory, and the assured prospect of being for ever with Him, she said emphatically,— "Without *sin*, without temptation." Then, seeing me weep, she said, "Don't fret, you cannot grieve. Ask Mr. J—— to give his decided opinion as to how long this weakness may last, or whether I shall at all rally, and *you, only you*, tell me mother." Accordingly, at his daily visit, her medical man was consulted, and gave it as his opinion that a collapse might take place at any time, but advised that the sad news should be modified in the telling, and not

tell her at all unless she asked, he thought she would probably forget. But she did not forget, and unless her memory had quite left her, it was not at all likely she should forget. The safety of her soul, and its eternal happiness was her one great concern. Everything else was comparatively insignificant. In the course of an hour she inquired, "Mother, what did Mr. J—— say?" "He said, my darling, that you get weaker; that your pulse was altered since yesterday, and that he was afraid he could not give you to hope for ultimate recovery now the lungs had become affected; how long you might keep in this weak state he could not tell." She said, "I think it will be slow." This fearful announcement, that her young life was to be cut short, gave her no uneasiness; she bore it with great fortitude. Most of the day she lay under the influence of morphia, in the evening an attack of sickness came on, but her mind seemed calm and peaceful. A dear one wrote as follows:—

"My darling Ellen,—

"Suffering, waiting still in great tribulation. That tribulation in which the saints wash their robes, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. My dearest, our love for you is so great, but His love, oh, how much greater, for He hath loved us from the foundation of the world, yea, for ever and ever. Oh, this body of mortality, how it hinders and impedes the soul which would love Him if it only could."

13th.—Sunday night. The oppressive stillness of midnight, whilst the dear one is under the influence of morphia and lies in a living death, is a contrast to the

deep anxieties of the expiring day, wherein our hearts have been wrung with anguish in witnessing the distressing paroxysms, mental or bodily, or both, of which our suffering child has been the subject. The early morning sun shone brightly on the church's steeple when at her request I read the second lesson for the day, Luke xxiv. The simple, yet beautiful, account of the Resurrection and the journey to Emmaus cheered both our hearts, and we prayed that He who is the Resurrection and the Life would raise up us also and present us to *His* Father and *our* Father, to His God and our God. Not less comforting was the second lesson for evening, where St. Paul assures us that "Those who sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him," &c. Dr. C—— paid his daily visit, and prayed with and for her. During the evening she said, "Have I said something wrong to you to-day, mother?" "Did you think you spoke irritably, dear? I think you scarcely knew what you were saying." "No, I did not." Throughout this tedious affliction this tenderness of conscience has been a marked trait in her character. Any impatient word or gesture, though only momentary and when uttered under the pressure of extreme bodily or mental anguish, has met with the severest condemnation.

14th. This has been a day of extreme weakness and inability to speak, except to ask for what she wanted.

15th. Another weary day has been added to the long list of weary days our dear one has passed through. To-night she said, "I feel I could die peacefully and quietly if—". The remainder of the sentence was inarticulate, so I said, "If it were not for us." "No,

mother, I would not say such a thing." By-and-bye, "Why do you all wish me to live? it is cruel of you, very cruel, when there is no hope of my getting better."

"16th. After a day of extreme weakness and a very restless evening, at length our dear one sleeps. Sleep purchased by an opiate, still it is sleep, beautiful sleep! sweet emblem of the sleep of death to which she is surely tending, whose lengthening shadows even now stretch over her. She has been able to talk only a very little. After two efforts to make me understand, she said, "Did I think pain was *sent* by God, or permitted by Him, because in Job's case Satan was evidently the cause of his suffering, and *she* thought that Satan had much to do with our sufferings." I referred to the Fall as the great cause why we became subject to suffering. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," live a dying life, or "*Dying thou shalt die.*" That it was difficult to say to what extent Satan's power was permitted in the development of disease; and in some diseases perhaps more than in others, as in the case of the Gospel demoniac, where it was evident that Satan was the direct agent; but, blessed be God, we have the stronger than the strong man on our side, and if He be for us, who can be against us?"

Sarah wrote :—

"March 16th, 1870.

"My own darling Sister,—

"It is Wednesday night; but as I cannot go out on account of a very bad cold, I think I cannot employ my spare time better than in writing to you. Oh! if I

could only be with Ellen is the thought that rises twenty times during the day ; but it is a trial sent to teach us submission to God's will, and as such we must strive to bear it with patience. My own darling, your race is nearly run, your warfare is nearly accomplished, and He who has been with you these two weary years of suffering will not leave you or forsake you. What a great happiness to be in a world where there is no sin ; where all is pure and holy, and, more blessed still, to live for ever with the Lord. The very thought of it makes me feel willing to bear and suffer everything, so we may be counted worthy at last to join that holy company. Mr. D—— enquired very kindly after you the other day, and expressed great sympathy with you in your suffering. The Misses B—— are very kind to us, and yet a great longing to come home will take possession of me, and is only stifled by hard work, which, I can assure you, I have plenty of. Give my love to all at home, and that God may lift up the light of His countenance upon you and grant you peace, is the prayer of your

“Loving Sister,
“SARAH.”

“Willing to bear and suffer everything so we may be counted worthy to join that holy company.” How little could she think when writing this that her own race was so nearly run, that a few short months would end *her* earthly “*warfare*,” and place her by her sister's side in the sweet Home above for which her soul was yearning. Although she then thought that the spirit-longings were for the earthly home. Types and

shadows are these earthly homes, and all the fond affections associated with them, of invisible realities. Then "what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness," looking for and hastening to the time when the numbers being gathered in, the Church shall be complete. Ellen's weakness had now become so constant and distressing that her medical attendant thought it probable that she would not live many days. There was little perceptible change. She was seldom able to speak, excepting when harassed by those dark temptations which often returned with violence, and seemed to give fresh strength to the flickering spark of life. Like the woman in the Gospel, I was often constrained to say, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on my daughter."

"March 20th. Dear E.— seemed much worse. For some hours her breathing was very laboured. Dr. C. visited her, and prayed with her. His parting text was, "The Lord shall give His angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up." As we watched away the silent hours of night, she gradually rallied again."

"21st. If possible, this has been a more anxious day than any that has preceded it. Coupled with extreme weakness of body has been anguish of spirit, harrowing to witness. About noon she exclaimed, "Oh, I shall be lost—I shall be lost!" "No, darling, you will not be lost." "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His;" "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever;" He looks upon the travail of His soul and is satisfied;" "Heaven and earth shall pass

away, but His words shall not pass away." You have given unmistakable proofs that you are His child, therefore you will not be lost. After a pause she said she had had a most distressing dream, and tried to relate it, but was thoroughly overpowered by anguish of spirit and weakness of body. I suggested that these vile thoughts and imaginations were doubtless, even in sleep, insinuated by the subtle adversary, Satan, who, seeing he had lost his prey, would nevertheless not cease to harass the soul who had escaped his grasp. Try, darling, to look to the Cross of Christ. Place the temptation *here*, and the Cross *there*, and try to keep looking to the Cross. "When the enemy cometh in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." The standard is the Cross. You will come off *more* than a conqueror through Him who has loved you. After another pause, she bitterly lamented that a "wicked word" was fastening itself on her mind, and she could not get rid of it. Well, look to the cleansing blood. Whilst we remain in the body we carry an evil heart. It is not until the gold is thoroughly refined, and the Master sees his own image reflected, that the process is complete. The *thought* is not a sin, because you hate it, and would fain be rid of it. Think,

"Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness,
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

"Bold shall I stand in that great day,
For who ought to my charge shall lay?
Since by Thy blood absolved I am,
From sin's tremendous curse and shame."

In reply to the frequent and heartrending cries of "Oh, my God, have mercy upon me! Oh, my God, have pity upon me!" I quoted all the suitable texts I could think of, such as "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of Life freely;" "Come unto Me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I *will* give you rest;" "Him that cometh unto Me I *will* in no wise cast out;" "Father, I *will* that they whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory," and encouraged her to look simply to Jesus. She replied, "Oh, mother, you don't know what it is." Alas, for poor weak human nature! Towards evening she became calmer. Such painful phases in the history of God's hidden ones raises the finger of silence. Whilst the inner feeling forces itself, "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself," the *why* and the *wherefore* to us in our imperfect state must remain a mystery. It may be that Satan is permitted, more than we think, to work upon an enfeebled state of body and mind. "He is in thine hand, only spare his life;" but as soon as the mandate goes forth, "The Lord rebuke thee," follows, if not the joyful assurance, yet the quiet and peaceful calm.

About this time there were some bright spring days, such as sometimes come in March, when the earth throws off the cold and gloom of winter, and the budding trees and hedges show that the time of the singing of birds is come. It was remarked on one of these bright days, that the plumb trees facing the sick room would soon be in blossom. Shortly after Ellen said, "I don't want to see the trees blossom yet, I feel I should not like to die when they were in blossom, it would make me wish to

go out. The happiest part of my life was the first summer after my illness commenced, when I had Sarah, after she went I was never so happy, I used to enjoy the trees when she took me out. I should like to go out of doors once more, it seems so long since I did." At another time, "I hope I shall see the spring flowers." This wish was fulfilled—her room was plentifully supplied with violets and the early flowers of spring; and it was her special wish that her grave might be made where the sun would shine upon it, and the green grass and white daisies grow over it. About this time, too, she arranged her little worldly matters, saying to whom she wished her books and little keepsakes to be given, adding, "Mother, you take all my clothes and every thing that belongs to me for yourself. I thought when that new calico was bought, I should never live to want it. I always, from a child, had an impression that I should not live to be a woman." It was in this cheerful and resigned manner that she uniformly spoke of death. It was only when she was harassed by those dark temptations that death appeared dreadful. Much of the inner life of this period that would have been interesting to know was lost, in consequence of the constant irritating cough which compelled her to be silent for hours, and even days, together.

"March 23rd. The early part of to-day was passed more comfortably, but it has ended distressingly. Some severe applications have had to be used which caused great anguish, and it again went to our hearts to hear the low wail of pain, and the plaintive cry, "Oh! my God, have pity upon me? Oh! my God, take me?" After the anguish ceased, the restlessness continued for several hours."

"25th. To-day set in with much sickness. Towards evening she was relieved by medicine, and able to talk a little. The recognition of departed saints formed one of the topics of converse, and the prospect of knowing those in heaven, whom she had loved so dearly on earth, afforded her comfort and encouragement. A friend remarked, that "We do not suffer *for* sin, but *from* sin." This appeared to give a turn to her thoughts. By and bye, she said she did not suffer so much from a want of assurance, as from the evil thoughts which perpetually harassed her. That when she lay on her left side, which was comparatively easy, she was more harassed than when she lay on her right side, which gave her great uneasiness, and she thought Satan took advantage of her ease of body to make her mind uneasy. "Yes, dear, this he does because he sees his time is short. If you were his willing slave, you would not be so harassed. He knows your weakest point, for though a fallen spirit, he is an archangel in wisdom." She said to be with him in hell would be intollerable, she never could, but that she believed he had had great power over her during her illness. Again, she was reminded of the "precious blood," and, the "Lord shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." "Father, save me from this hour." "Father, glorify Thy name." Yet I felt unable to solve the difficult problem, as to how far, in this life, Satan may be permitted to have power over the bodies as well as the souls of the elect, we know for certain that He, the great I am, has appointed him his bounds which he may not pass. She said she had been thinking of the Saviour's bitter agony; how great it must have been, when it forced

a sweat of blood! and when *He* looked for human sympathy, His disciples slept; and so our conversation turned into the channel, the depths of which the angels cannot fathom, and the love which redeemed a fallen world, shed its softening influence over her, and she slept peacefully."

29th. This has been a day of extreme weakness, but the mind seems to have been calm and peaceful. Her brother was confirmed to-day, and, so far as she could, she has evinced anxiety for him, wishing him to be assured of her prayers for him, and of her earnest desire that he may become a communicant. She has given him a book of devotions, which has been a help to herself, and also her New Testament, begging him not to let a day pass without reading it.

31st. The month closes upon our dear one suffering extreme weakness of body, but as the outward man decays, the inward man is renewed day by day.

The Rev. J. D. G—— made her a most comfortable visit to-day. It was very pleasing to see the eagerness with which she drank in the words of eternal life. His visits have been blessed to her. One evening, about this time, it was remarked to her, "You are a day nearer home, darling." "Yes," she said—

"One sweetly solemn thought
Comes to me o'er and o'er,
I'm nearer home to-day
Than I have been before.

"Nearer my Father's house,
Where the many mansions be,
Nearer the great White Throne,
Nearer the jasper sea.

“Nearer the bound of life,
Where we lay our burdens down,
Nearer leaving the Cross,
Nearer gaining the crown.’”

On another occasion, when a similar remark was made, she exclaimed—

“O for the jasper sea,
O for the golden floor,
O for the sun of righteousness
That setteth nevermore.’”

It was thus, when strength permitted, that out of the fulness of her heart her mouth spoke.

CHAPTER VII.

THE END—FALLING ASLEEP IN JESUS.

The last of mortal days and best
Is *that*, which brings to endles rest.

APRIL with its sunshine and flowers dawned upon the sinking invalid, but ere its hours were numbered, she had fallen asleep in Jesus. S—— wrote :—

“My darling Nellie,

“Don’t think me unkind because I have not written to you sooner. A fortnight to day will be Good Friday. Perhaps God may spare you to see yet another Good Friday. If not, a glorious Easter will be yours. You know we read, “But the righteous live for evermore, their reward also is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the Most High. Therefore shall they receive a glorious kingdom, and a beautiful crown from the Lord’s hand, for with His right hand shall He cover them, and with His arm shall He protect them.”

“Unto God’s gracious mercy and protection I commit thee.”

“Your most loving

“SARAH.”

"April 3rd. Another earthly Sabbath has passed over our weary one, she feels, she says, as if she could not live. The day has been a trying one, and her doctor says she grows weaker."

"4th. A restless night was succeeded by a most weary day, and the well-nigh worn-out traveller did not sleep until the afternoon. There has been much incoherence, and although the daily lessons were read, texts of scripture quoted, and prayer offered, she seemed only partially to understand those exercises in which she so much delighted. Towards evening, however, the intellect seemed clearer, and she asked me to read to her Tennyson's "May Queen" and the "New Year's Eve," and I found that her own feelings and wishes were specially portrayed in the beautifully touching lines:—

"The building rook will caw from the windy tall elm tree,
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea;
And the swallow will come back again with summer o'er the
 wave;
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering grave.

"Upon the chancel casement, and upon that grave of mine,
In the early, early morning, the summer sun will shine,
Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the hill,
When you are warm asleep, mother, and all the world is still.

"When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the waning
 light,
You'll never see me more in the long, grey fields at night,
When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow cool
On the oat-grass, and the sword-grass, and the bulrush in the
 pool.

"You will bury me, my mother, just beneath the hawthorn
shade,
And you'll come sometimes and see me, where I am lowly
laid;
I shall not forget you, mother, "*I may see*" you when you
pass,
With your feet above my head, in the long and pleasant
grass.

"Nay, nay! you must not weep, nor let your grief be wild;
You should not fret for me, mother, you have another
child.

"If I can, I'll come again, mother, from out my resting
place;
Though you will not see me, mother, I shall look upon your
face;
Though I "*may*" not speak a word, I shall hearken what you
say,
And be often, often, with you, when you think I'm far
away."

Then she spoke of the many little trials she had experienced during her illness from well-meaning, but incautious visitors, who had spoken freely of her looking well, and of the probability of her recovery. Remarks of this sort had greatly troubled her, and opened the way for temptation, till, at last, she had felt afraid to see any one lest she should be the subject of some painful remark. Alluding to her approaching death, she said, "We are only born to die;" yes, but "As in Adam *all* die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." "I trust my sins are forgiven." Hear what God says, "I have blotted out as a cloud thy transgressions, and as a thick cloud thine iniquities." Far as the east is from the west, so far have I removed

thy transgressions from thee ;” and St. Paul, could say, “ O, death, where is thy sting ? O, grave, where is thy victory ? Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” You will join the family above, and it will not be long before I come too, and you will be there to welcome me, she said, “ Don’t be long.” I then read, “ Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His covenant, confirmed it by an oath ; that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil whither the forerunner has for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever.” “ You have fled to this refuge, therefore you are safe ; living or dying, you are the Lord’s.”

We may here be permitted to digress for a moment, and call to mind the caution of the Great Teacher, “ Take heed that ye offend not one of these little ones that believe in me.” The half-expressed surmise, or the cold look, may cause hours of secret anguish to a susceptible nature, so prone is poor frail human nature to misunderstand, to misjudge, yea, even to condemn, without a cause. “ Some temperaments carry all their sufferings on the surface, others hide them deep down, far away from human ken.” Such was the case with Ellen ; she bore pain and weakness with an unruffled brow and an uncomplaining spirit which was sometimes taken, even by well-meaning people, for lack of energy. Her naturally sensitive mind having become sharpened

by bodily disease, she was quick to discern this, and readily took in the idea that she was thought to be an impostor, and the idea was *horror*, causing her to shrink from all society excepting her most intimate friends. It would be well if those who pay friendly visits to the sick room were more careful of their words. If instead of trying to cheer the invalid, as they think, by telling him he is looking *better* than *they* expected, they were to speak soothingly of the country to which the Christian is journeying, and so draw his mind unconsciously from himself, they would then be *bearing* instead of *adding* to his burden. The so-called friendly visits to the sick frequently do much more harm than good. What we want to see is more sympathy with suffering, more like-mindedness with the meek and lowly Jesus, who, on all occasions, *pitied* and *helped* the sick and the sorrowing.

April 7th. Sickness, weakness, and darkness have, more or less, been the companions of our dear E—— for the last three days. Sometimes it seems as if a *horror* of *great darkness* fell upon her. At other times she is peaceful; but amidst all she does not lose her trust in Jesus as *her* Saviour. What she dreads most is darkness at the *last*. Human help seems powerless, but prayer is omnipotent. May it prevail. A loving hand has sent the following :—

“ My darling Ellen,—

“ If it is the will of God, I hope to see you on Thursday. I shall come by the morning train. It will be a great happiness to spend Good Friday with you, darling, and to watch together in the three hours

of agony; you making an offering of your agony, whether of mind, or body, or both, and I of the active service required of me whilst in health. What an unspeakable mystery! The Son of God, hanging on the Cross between earth and heaven, a spectacle for deriding men! Ellen, dear, such love as that can never fail. Those open wounds are a silent voice, calling to the oppressed simply to enter in until the tyranny be overpast. And all this loving Saviour asks is, 'Believest thou this?' 'Yea, Lord, we do believe, help Thou our unbelief.' 'We will cling to Thee, yea, though the night be so dark, we cannot see the very faintest shadow of Thee, yet Thou art with us.' 'By Thy bloody sweat, by Thy precious wounds, by the crown of thorns which pierced Thy Sacred Head, by the fearful agony which spent itself in the soul-stirring words:—My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?' By all these Thou wilt deliver us, and though there is need be that for a season you, my dear one, should be in heaviness through manifold temptations, yet the trial of your faith, more precious than gold, though it be tried even by fire, shall be found to praise and honour and glory in the day of the Lord. Jesus, and you shall receive what you are humbly hoping for, and so patiently waiting for, even the salvation of your soul. That it may be His holy will to support you, and lead you to the end of your thorny path, until you reach the shores of that fair ocean, in sight of the crown awaiting you, poor pilgrim of the Cross, is the earnest prayer, of

“ Your loving,——

"April 9th, 1870.

"My darling Nellie,—

"I was afraid you would think it long before you had a letter. I am very thankful that your sickness is a little better, it must have caused you so much suffering. Oh, darling, I shall be so grateful if it pleases God to spare you, that we may see you once more on earth. Poor sufferer! You may well say you are 'toiling in rowing;' but the greater will be the enjoyment of the rest when 'He bringeth you into the haven, where you would be.' I went last Wednesday to see poor Mrs. ——. She is still lingering here. You know she is suffering from an internal cancer, almost worn to a skeleton, always in pain. She dare not lie in bed for one day, or she would never get up again. She has no comforts, but depends upon her daughter, who works in a factory. All she has to look forward to is my visits. I generally read to her out of the Epistles or Psalms, and a hymn. She is particularly fond of hymns. I gave her a picture of the Crucifixion. She was so pleased with it, and said she would have it placed where she could see it when she felt unhappy, for in thinking of our blessed Lord's sufferings she would forget her own, for, 'Was any sorrow like unto His sorrow?' As I was returning home I saw such a beautiful star shoot across the heavens, and I instantly thought of you; and such peace and comfort sprang up in my heart, and I felt I could willingly give you up, that you might shine as a star in the kingdom of heaven. I must stop now, and may God bless and strengthen you, darling.

"Your ever loving sister,

"SARAH."

"April 10th. Another peaceful Sabbath still finds our dear one in the suffering body. It does sometimes seem as if the poor worn-out flesh could bear no more; but our thoughts are not as His thoughts, nor "our ways as His ways." The horror of great darkness does not altogether leave her, and "Oh, if the valley were passed," escapes now and then. We can only encourage her to trust in the Lord, assuring her that, according to His own promise, she will not be left alone. He is pledged to be with her, whether she sensibly feel Him or not. After earnestly craving for some bodily relief, she wished to be told what her doctor said. "He said, dear, that you are such a wreck, it is difficult to prescribe for you." "He is quite right, I am a wreck."

"11th. There has been only one attack of sickness; but the day has been a very weary one, and to the eye of sense it seemed doubtful whether she would live to see its close. At night the breathing became very quick and short. Her mind seems to have been peaceful.

"12th. The weary traveller is longing for rest, though not without some misgivings lest she should be left alone in the valley. Feeling tired out with watching, I had fallen into a dose, when she suddenly said, "Oh, mother, I wish I were you." "Why, darling?" "Then I should not be afraid to die; you look so peaceful." I replied, "I dare not say that *I am not*, I think I am; death, though the entrance into life, is still the wages of sin, and we naturally shrink from it. Our Lord must have felt the same shrinking when in that agony of blood He cried, 'Oh, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me'. This clinging to

life is one of the laws of our nature; if it were otherwise, we should become careless of life's duties, and the world would come to a dead stand." After a pause, she asked if I thought her having read the "library books," as many of them were novels, had been wrong. I said that as the books she had read were those of a healthy tone, and, moreover, that as she had read them for recreation, during her many lonely hours, no doubt they had had a beneficial effect, so far as they had served to draw her mind from herself. It would have been impossible for her always to be reading books of deep thought."

"Easter Eve. Our beloved one is still in the groaning body. Her wish that she might "once more see her brother and sisters" has been granted, and in this respect she feels it is no "vain thing" to trust the Lord. For the last three days her mind, on the whole, seems to have been peaceful. The prominent desires of her soul appear to have been that she may be "safe at the last," and that her actual "dying may be short." In this interval of calm, I have striven to keep constantly before her the unchangeable love of Him whose agonising death and quiet resting and consecrating of the grave she has once more been permitted to look at through the vista of eighteen hundred years, and in whose glorious presence, ere the sacred season again returns her ransomed spirit, will appear as a part of the "travail of his soul," and in whom He will "be satisfied." The *exceeding great* and *precious* promises have formed the basis of our meditation, such as "Him that cometh unto me, I *will* in no wise cast out." "It is not the *will* of your Father that one of these little ones should

perish." "Father, I *will* that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." "Whosoever *will*, let him take of the water of life freely."

Later in the evening of this day, her doctor thought the end might be very near; yet she lingered through that and several other nights of suffering, and was permitted, whilst tottering on the border land, to welcome the return of another Easter morning, hearing, but her failing senses scarcely comprehending, the joyful truth running along the mighty ages, "The Lord is risen." And whilst the Church militant was singing its glad Alleluias she could but faintly re-echo the sound, and lie passively awaiting hers ummons to join the Alleluias of the Church triumphant. On Easter Monday this child of sorrow had to wade through one of earth's bitterest trials, and say her last "good bye" to F——, who was obliged to leave her on that day. Yet, severe as was the trial, it was slightly softened by the assurance that the parting with one dear sister, would, for a few days introduce her to the society and companionship of her beloved Sarah. After the parting, Dr. C—— visited her, and in the evening she said to me, "I feel I have not long to live; you must not fret, I want you to get accustomed to it, mother. I am not sorry I have suffered; I am not afraid, Christ will be with me. My fear of death is greatly diminished; it may return, if so, I trust I shall be strengthened. I said to Dr. C—— I trust the peace I feel is not a false peace; he said, "O, no, I am sure it is not; I would not say so if I thought it was." After a pause, and with slight agitation, "I have suffered; not last nor least has been the

parting with my sisters. I love them so, and when I parted with F——, knowing I should see her no more, I thought it would break my heart." In alluding again to it, to Sarah, who had now arrived, she said, "I feel as if I cannot bear it." Sarah said, "Yes, dear, you *can* bear it; you mistrust yourself. You will soon see F—— again, or the Bible is not true. Does it not say that "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." We all know how short a day is, so short will it seem to you, darling, before you see F—— again." A word spoken in season, how good is it? She did not again allude to the painful subject.

The next day, however, the trial was repeated. Her favourite brother was obliged to obey the stern call of duty, and say a last farewell. Yet this time the suffering was less severe; so true is it that the first deep sorrow of any kind can never in its intensity of suffering be exactly repeated. Shall we say that the susceptibility to suffer becomes blunted by repetition? O no! but the capacity to suffer becomes enlarged, so that each succeeding trial leaves one stronger for the next, our loving Father perfecting our weakness in His strength.

As with sorrow, so with joy; it, too, bears a corresponding ratio. Who is there that cannot remember the first full heart of joy, when he was constrained to exclaim, "My cup runneth over!" but as mercy after mercy has been vouchsafed, he has not felt less thankful, but less extatic, His joy, like his grief, has become more subdued as spring melts into summer, and summer into the quiet ripefulness of autumn; but when the death Jordan is once passed, the overpowering

joy of the redeemed spirit will pass on from glory to glory. *Then* there will be an endless progression.

Sarah was permitted to stay a week with her, and scarcely did she ever leave her side; even when she slept, Ellen requested that it might be in her sight. These, the last days they spent together on earth, though sad, were happy in their sadness. Even though the sacred veil of secrecy be drawn over their private communings, we, nevertheless, now and then caught glimpses of the glorious hope which enabled the one to endure, and animated the other in her path of life. The first Sunday after Easter was her last on earth, and in the evening she rallied considerably, and said, "Mother and Sarah talk," and so we did, until the shadows deepened, and the stars began to peep. Amongst other interesting topics, the incidents of a visit to Derbyshire were detailed; and some pleasing reminiscences of a catechetical lecture in the parish church of Chesterfield, by the Ven. Archdeacon Hill, to the children of the Blue Coat School, were both interesting and profitable,—the subject being that part of our Blessed Lord's last discourse to His mourning disciples, (St. John xvi. 16), in which he comforts them with the sweet assurance of His return after the "little while" of earthly sorrow shall have passed away,—when the night of weeping shall have produced the precious sheaves of the full ripe harvest home; when the travailing pains of the Church Militant shall have been swallowed up in that universal burst of joy echoing from pole to pole. "Lo this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is the Lord, we have waited for Him, and He will bless us" then death having been swallowed up in

victory, and the kingdoms of this world having become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, the Church shall put on her bridal robes of purest whiteness, and reflect the image of her once-absent, but now ever-present All, and in All. And lest the eighteen hundred years of absence, standing against the promise of the "little while," when He would return, should confound the young intelligences of his audience, the venerable man, with his speaking face, and liquid voice, called upon his young friends to explain the apparent discrepancy. Then stood up one, who, with a well-trained voice, made the sacred edifice resound with the words, firmer than the everlasting mountains,—“One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” Was it surprising, with her own feet already on the borders of the promised land, that the glowing prospect should overmaster the weary Ellen until she slept the sleep which He giveth His beloved? At two o'clock the ensuing morning Sarah resumed her watch beside the dying couch until six o'clock, which was the hour appointed for her departure. She read and talked as much as Ellen's strength could bear, and when she was aroused to say the last “good-bye,” she so lamented that she had been sleeping, adding, “I wish I had known last night.” She was reminded that she had been told. She replied, “Oh, dear! it seems so hard to part with one's sisters.” Sarah then laid her finger on her eyelids, and said, “Go to sleep again, darling;” then, after one fond look, they separated on earth, so soon to meet again in the home of the *blessed*. But it had now become very evident that, to a great extent, Ellen was loosing the sense of mental suffering. For

have her hands placed in his, whilst his "God bless thee, my child," was met with a momentary response in the returning satisfied look. After talking soothingly to her for a short time, he prayed with her and took his final leave. She made several attempts to say something, but all that could be gathered was—"First—of—all—you—must—do—do—Mother." Then memory seemed entirely to fail her, and she would add, "Dear me—never mind." At length I said, "Don't trouble, darling; if it be the Lord's will I should know, He will help you to say it. If not, let us try to submit to His will." This appeared to satisfy her, and she never finished the sentence. At eight o'clock she wished to be carried out of doors, as she said, "*once more*," and when we attempted to divert her from her purpose, she exclaimed, "Oh, father, do—do—take me out." However, she soon changed her mind, and said, "I will not go out *now*." As the night advanced, a creeping coldness came over her feet and legs, and she asked to "lie in mother's arms." Whilst doing so, she was reminded of the Everlasting Arms, in which she was so safely kept; her calm and peaceful look made the response which her tongue failed to utter. About midnight, noticing her father's weary look, she said, "Poor father, he looks so tired." Afterwards, wishing to be moved, which caused her to utter a momentary wail of anguish, and made us think *we* had given her pain; observing our grief, she was much distressed, and, putting forth all her remaining strength, stretched her arms round her father's neck, and kissing him several times, said most piteously, "Father,—I—didn't—say—you—hurt—me, I—didn't—say—you—hurt—me." As the spark of

life waned in its socket, previous to its final extinction, her love for us seemed to increase in its intensity, and, from time to time, she tried to make us understand by looks, when words failed her, how great was her love for those she was leaving. She made one more attempt to express a wish about something, which she could not finish. All we could gather was "Father—you—have book—and—and—read—it." We guessed, rather than understood, what book she meant, and her father said, "Yes, darling, I will." Perceiving that she was going fast, I quoted—"Who are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed—" She spoke, and we thought she said, "That—will—do, —I—am—dying—now." Then making us understand that she wished to be laid on her left side, she stretched out her emaciated arms, and held me for some moments in a loving embrace, then loosing her hold, she said, "Now—leave—me—alone—Mother." She spoke no more; but appeared to sink to sleep. The breathing became shorter and shorter, till death's final shadow passed over her fair face, and then without a struggle or a groan her spirit passed away to the bosom of her Saviour at fifty minutes past three o'clock on the morning of the 28th of April, 1870. She died in silence, no testimony being *then* required as to the power of Christ in her soul. Her life had been the testimony, and by it "she being dead, yet speaketh." To one friend in particular she used to say, "Emma, I could not bear up, if I did not hold close intercourse with God." Therefore, as an eminent divine, whose name we forget, has truly said, "Let us never sorrow excessively or faithlessly for those

who sleep in Jesus. It is not merely that they will be raised again at the last day. It is not merely that we hope to join them in the unseen world. We are not at all severed from them now. A *real strong* tie binds them to us still. I know that at that awful moment, in which is gathered up the destinies, when the last breath commits the freed spirit into its Creator's hands, a great gulf is fixed between the bodily presence of the departed and ourselves. I know that for us, the tears of affection can no longer kindle in that eye, nor the voice of love reach us from those lips. But I know that the happy spirit who has put off that clay tabernacle, is a child of the same Father, united to the same Saviour, instinct with the same Holy Spirit, a member of the same Church, washed in the same baptism, saved in the same faith, beating with the same pulse of holy love, when I am in communion with God, when I am in praise and prayer, when I am holiest and happiest, I am with it still. What has death done then? It has severed the bodily presence, it has left the more real union of the spirit: it has not touched it. It cannot touch the Communion of Saints. It has verily taught us more faithfully and fervently than before to bless God's holy name for all His servants departed this life in His faith and fear, beseeching Him to give us grace to follow their good example, that with them we may be partakers of His heavenly kingdom."

On the following Sunday, Dr. C.—preached her funeral sermon from Rev. vii. 13, 14—"One of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, sir, thou knowest. And he said

unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." In reference to the dear departed, the doctor said, "My thoughts have been almost irresistibly turned to the subject I have tried to bring before you, from the fact of my having had to commit to its last abode on earth, the body of one whom I had learned to value as a coadjutor in the work of education, and by whose bedside it has often been my privilege to sit and talk of the world to come for the last two years and more. It was a privilege I highly valued, for though she drank deeply of the cup of suffering, yet there was always so much cheerful resignation to the will of God, so much childlike confidence, that whatsoever He appointed must needs be for the best—such a growing love to the Saviour, that the chamber of sickness, and at length of death, was ever a spot hallowed by the presence of weakness and weariness patiently endured; and of Him, by whose aid alone, they were so endured. When harassing thoughts arose, the result, perhaps, partly of the malady from which she suffered, but certainly also from the suggestion of those vile evil spirits who are ever ready to aid the great enemy of our souls, and whisper to the mind enfeebled by disease, doubts, or difficulties. The eagerness with which the precious promises in the words of Scripture were laid hold of, and the smile of peace that would succeed to the look of anxiety, would bring forcibly to the recollection the exclamation of the Apostle, "If God be for us, who can be against us!"

And as the year rolled on, and the Church's seasons succeeded to each other in their sacred round. The

only season, remember, of which, cut off from all contact with the outer world, she could be conscious, the pleasing change from the solemnity of Advent to the holy joy of Christmas, and, in fact, all the variation of fast and festival, were sources of so much interest and delight, that I have learned, myself, to value them more than ever I did before. To her parents and sorrowing friends, I may safely address those beautiful words:—

“ She is not dead—the child of our affection,
But gone into that school,
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,
And Christ, Himself, doth rule.
In that great cloister’s stillness and seclusion,
By guardian angels led,
Safe from temptation, safe from sin’s pollution,
She lives—whom we call dead.”

Now that same Saviour, who was about the bed, and about the path of this suffering follower of His, so weak in body, yet so strong in faith, is equally ready to aid each one of us in our journey Heavenwards, let us strive to come unto Him in the full confidence, that in His power, and by His aid, all our light afflictions, which, after all, are comparatively but for a moment, will work out for us an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory, and that we, too, may help to swell the throng of them who shall have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, and spend an eternity of bliss, where the Lamb that is in the midst of the Throne shall lead us unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.

CHAPTER VIII.

SARAH — EARLY DAYS — CONFIRMATION — FIRST COMMUNION—ANXIETY FOR OTHERS—HOME AFFECTIONS.

THE bond which had united the hearts of Ellen and Sarah together was a peculiar and tender one. Scarcely varying a year in their age, the associations which linked them together were peculiarly the same. They were taught the same prayer together, received the first lessons from Divine Truth together, read in the same book together, played together, slept together. The happiness of *one* was the happiness of the other, and the sorrow of *one* was the sorrow of the other; till, as if by common consent, it became a household practice to link their names together in the most trivial concerns of everyday life. Yet, whilst the springs of action were the same, the mode in which they were developed was very dissimilar. Whilst Ellen was plaintive and fearful, dreading a foe at every turn, Sarah was bright and cheerful, a happy, careless child. Thus through childhood's days they journeyed hand in hand, the buoyant spirits of the one keeping in check the tendency to sadness in the other. Sarah gave early indi-

cations of possessing that faith which worketh by love, in her cheerful submission to what appeared to be the will of God. The unshrinking way in which she took up the daily cross, and her faithful fulfilment of daily duties, showed that she endured as "seeing Him who is invisible." Whilst scarcely yet fifteen, she was called to leave her home to assist in teaching others. The manner in which she performed her work, earned for her from her minister the title of the "good girl." This gentleman was anxious to retain her services, but her parents thinking her capable of filling a higher post, took her home for a few months to wait upon Ellen; and if cheerful companionship, untiring love, and a tendency to look always on the bright side of things could have brought back health and vigour to the sufferer, it would indeed have been accomplished. As it was, they sweetened the cup of sorrow, and lightened for several months the burden of the weary one. But a wise and unerring Providence had appointed a separation, and on the 27th of July, 1868, Sarah entered upon her short career as governess in a boy's preparatory school at ———, where she soon became much beloved both by pupils and teachers. Here, as at home, she was the centre of brightness and happiness. In her last short illness, some of the boys remarked that they loved her better than any of their teachers. Two days after leaving home she wrote:—

"My dear Mother,—

"I know you feel very anxious to hear from me. I am getting on very nicely. Miss B—— and Miss A—— are very kind to me. I get on much better

with the boys than I expected ; but I must not be too sure, as all the boarders have not yet come. I and F—— went out for a walk last night to the Arboretum. It is a very pretty place. This afternoon is a half holiday, and we shall go out again. We are now in the school-room with the boys, who are learning their lessons. I felt very queer when I got out of the train and arrived here, but I feel all right now. How is poor Nellie getting on ? I can hear Walker playing the ‘Christmas Quadrilles,’ and it makes me think I can hear her. A boarder has come to-day who is as tall as I am. It is time to get ready for the walk, so I cannot say any more.

“ Your affectionate Daughter,

“ SARAH.”

The remainder of this year was passed in the quiet and unostentatious performance of every duty. In May, 1869, she was confirmed, and from that period to her death her Christian course was very marked and decided. A few extracts from a letter written before her confirmation, will suffice to show the light in which she viewed her position.

“ May 8th, 1869.

“ My dear Parents,—

“ You must accept my warmest thanks for the beautiful letters I received this morning. I shall look back upon my confirmation as the happiest period of my life, for I have had privileged advantages. It is not many that have had the blessings I have had, and it must be my earnest endeavour by God’s help to profit by them.

You ask me what Mr. D—— says; I cannot tell you all, but this I may say, that as he could not have the direction of the *whole* of my preparation, he has done what he could, which I can assure you has been a great deal. I had a beautiful letter and book from him this morning. We are to be at the church at half-past two.

“Your loving Daughter,

“SARAH.”

The kind clergyman who, she says, “had done what he could, which was a great deal,” had set her mind at rest as to whether her repentance was real. She had been reading a treatise on confirmation, which had caused her to doubt her sincerity and fitness for confirmation and Holy Communion. She told her sister her trouble, who advised her to show the book to Mr. D——, and to tell him her sorrow. A time was appointed, and according to the church’s direction in the “Exhortation to Holy Communion,” she “opened her grief, and by the ministry of God’s Holy Word received the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of her conscience, and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness.” This interview seems to have had its desired effect in quieting her anxieties. A day or two after confirmation she wrote:—“The bishop confirmed 200 candidates in the morning, and 300 in the afternoon. I was confirmed in the afternoon. In the morning the cavalry of N—— had attended service in their uniform. The bishop drew thence a comparison, and said what a much harder battle we had to fight, and what a great

deal more strength we needed than those who fought this world's battle; and it was that we might have this strength given to us that we had assembled together; for it was far harder to bear scoffs and jeers on account of our religion, than to fight on any earthly battle-field. Nothing could be more solemn than the manner in which he uttered the prayer, raising his hands at the words 'that she may continue thine for ever,' and bowing his head at the conclusion of the prayer till it almost touched us. When he had confirmed two, he stopped and said that as soon as we returned to our seats, we were to kneel down and thank God for the inestimable gift of the Holy Spirit. At the conclusion of the service, the hymn was sung beginning, 'Thine for ever, God of love,' &c." On the Sunday after her confirmation she went to Holy Communion, and from this time we think it will not be presumption to say that she "walked with God." If harassing thoughts and shadowy doubts did ever after disturb her peace, they must have been of a fleeting nature, for her habitual walk was one of cheerful and willing obedience to the Master she had chosen. She sought also to bring others to Christ. Visiting amongst the poor to read to them, and in some cases to take them to church, was her delight. One poor blind woman she used to lead to church as often as circumstances permitted her, for in this respect she was circumscribed by her own immediate school duties. Yet it was her greatest happiness to distil a drop of comfort into the cup of sorrow, sickness, and poverty. She did what she could, laying it down as an humble thank-offering at her Redeemer's feet. Whilst she was at home for her

summer vacation this year, an old schoolfellow was fading away of consumption, and for her soul's welfare Sarah was most anxious, seizing every opportunity to read to her and draw her mind to divine and heavenly things. Yet her deepest affections centred in home. At Michaelmas she writes:—

“My dear Mother,—

“I was so startled and grieved when I heard the sad news, I was so totally unprepared for it. The probability of T——’s catching the fever had never crossed my mind; but we know ‘That all things work together for good to them that love God; and I feel that I can leave everything to Him. What a comforting thought it is, that Jesus feels our sorrows, too,—He can sympathise so truly with us, having felt it all before us. Oh, dear, I cannot realise it, I wish I could. The boys are all gone now, with the exception of two who are going to remain. On Monday we go to S——, and then to H——. It will be a change for us, and divert our thoughts a little. You must take great care of yourself, mother, dear, for if anything happens to you, what shall we do? We shall soon see you, for time goes so fast, that it will soon be Christmas, and we shall be all the happier for waiting a whole half-year. I wish I could comfort you a little in my letters, but you know I cannot express my feelings, especially on paper. It is a great disappointment to me,—I had so longed to see you all, and had laid out so many little plans.

“I am,

“Your loving Daughter,

“SARAH.”

Again, a few days later, she writes:—

“My dear Mother,—

“I was so pleased to have a letter this morning. It came just at the right time, for I felt so miserable, and your letter was quite a drop of comfort. It only wants seven weeks to the holidays. I do want to come home so much. On the half-holiday I went to see the poor blind woman, and am going to take her to Church every Wednesday evening.”

Thus was she “eyes to the blind,” and memory recalls, with what pleasure she looked back upon these visits to the House of God with her sightless companion. We have already seen, how, that when Christmas came, with its tender and joyous meetings, her hopes were realised, and how she strove to lighten Ellen’s burden, with her glad and happy smile; and how, when the last sad parting came, with what unflinching fortitude she lovingly closed the weary eyelids, bidding her sleep. How, in the hours of privacy, they had read, and talked, and prayed together, is known only to Him who keeps the “Book of Remembrance for those who call upon His name.”

CHAPTER IX.

ILLNESS — VISIT TO SCARBOROUGH — CONVALESCENCE —
DUTIES RESUMED.

PERHAPS none felt Ellen's death more than Sarah, yet her fortitude never forsook her, and on the night of the funeral her self-sacrificing love insisted upon sitting up all night to finish the mourning, as she and her sister were obliged to leave the next morning by an early train to resume their school duties. The morning was cold, and a six miles drive in an open vehicle, added to the chills which the loss of a night's rest had induced. She took cold, and probably never was quite well afterwards. Within a month she became ill. A physician was called in, who advised that she should be sent home for rest and good nursing. The family doctor apprehended an attack of typhoid. By degrees, however, it assumed a low type of fever, which lasted for some weeks. As soon as she was able to travel, her principal and friends sent her to the Convalescent Home at Scarborough, where she soon became a universal favourite. Change of scene and sea air appeared to do wonders. Her doctor pronounced her lungs to be

sound, but said she must not study for the present—her head would not bear it.

One day, whilst sitting on the beach with a kind friend, she said, that in her late illness she had had no wish to get better, that she longed to join her dear departed sister in the rest of Paradise. Dear child, one more year of patient waiting, and thy wish will be fulfilled. For glimpses of her life at Scarborough we must be pardoned for quoting some of the correspondence, in which we perceive the still and under-current longing for the Unseen which so often proves the forerunner of an early death.

“ August, 1870.

“ My dear Mother,—

“ I was so pleased to hear from you. Mr. C—— came to see me yesterday, and said there was no doubt that I had had a mild attack of typhoid fever. I am to wear a strengthening plaster on my side, not to go down to the shore, because the road is so steep, but to walk on level ground, have no baths, try to drink a little porter, and take medicine twice a day. I will give you a history of yesterday's proceedings. The servant called me up at half-past seven. The prayer-bell rang at a quarter to nine, afterwards breakfast. When over, some of the ladies went out. I could not, because we expected Mr. C——, so I went into the drawing-room and read an interesting book. Dinner at one, and out for a drive at three with Miss W——, who bought me a committee ticket for a month, which will admit me into the gardens near the sea. We returned home for tea about five; at half-past five

the bell rang for evening prayers at St. Martin's. Afterwards I went and sat in the gardens until seven, listening to the band and watching the waves dash upon the shore, thinking of you all at home, and wishing darling Nellie could have paid a visit to such a lovely spot. I got home about half-past seven and read my interesting book, till the supper bell rang at nine. After supper prayers, and then to bed. Several here are much stronger and can walk faster than I can. We live so comfortably, everything is of the best kind. My bedroom is so pleasant, I look out of my window, and the first thing I see is the church just across the road, so I sleep under the shadow of the church.

“Your affectionate Daughter,

“SARAH.”

And now in the Church's peaceful shade her body sleeps, until the bright Resurrection-morning when “Thy dead men shall live, and together with my dead body they shall arise,” obeying the joyous mandate of our risen Head, “Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.”

“August 1870.

“My dear Mother,—

“I am so sorry you are in trouble again. We must leave all in wiser hands than ours. Whatsoever happens will be for the best. I heard from N—the other day. Miss A— wants me back. Mr. C— thinks now I am able to walk, that the next fortnight will do more for me than the last. I have a sea-bath every other day. I should enjoy it very much, if I were a

little stronger; but the waves knock me down, and take away my breath. I went for a walk the other evening along the cliffs. I never enjoyed a walk more; the sea was rather rough, and the waves were dashing upon the rocks. It is very wild. The cliffs are covered with furze, blue-bells, and ferns. I gathered such a pretty nosegay, and only wished I could take it to Nellie's grave, and then I wondered as I often do, whether she could see me, and know what I was thinking about. We have such a wealth of books—some old friends, and several others I have not seen before. I enjoyed yesterday (Sunday) so much. I *shall* miss the services when I go away, but I won't think of it more than I can help. To strengthen my ankles, I put my feet first in hot water, and then pour a jug of cold water over them every night. I must say good-bye, with much love to all.

“Your loving Daughter,

“SARAH.”

“The Communion of Saints” was a subject she loved to think and converse about. She frequently alluded to it when she visited the grave of her sister. Her hope amounted to a certainty that not only would she know her in Heaven, but that even then there was a communion of spirit. She based her argument upon the parable of the “Rich man and Lazarus,” and St. Paul's “Cloud of Witnesses,” which seem to intimate that those who have themselves overcome by the blood of the Lamb, watch with intense interest the waging warfare of the “Family on earth.” There can be little doubt that our friends in Paradise are assured

of the final victory of those they have left behind struggling with the "waves of this troublesome world," but who, amidst all, are daily looking to "Jesus as the Author and finisher of their faith."

The following hymn was one of Sarah's special favourites :—

- "The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord,
She is His new creation
By water and the Word.
- "From Heaven He came and sought her
To be His Holy Bride,
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died.
- "Elect from every nation,
Yet one o'er all the earth,
Her charter of salvation,
One Lord, one Faith, one Birth.
- "One Holy Name she blesses,
Partakes one Holy Food,
And to one hope she presses,
With every grace endued.
- "Though with a scornful wonder
Men see her sore opprest,
By schisms rent asunder,
By heresies distrest ;
- "Yet saints their watch are keeping,
Their cry goes up, 'How long,'
And soon the night of weeping,
Shall be the morn of song.
- "Midst toil and tribulation,
And tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation
Of peace for evermore.

"Till with the vision glorious
Her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious
Shall be the Church at rest.

"Yet she on earth hath union
With God, the Three in One,
And mystic *sweet communion*
With those whose rest is won.

"O happy ones and holy,
Lord, give us grace that we,
Like them, the meek and lowly,
On high may dwell with Thee."

"Scarboroughh.

"August 24th, 1870.

"My dear Mother,—

"Miss W—— told me this morning that she had arranged for me to stay another fortnight, and that *she* would arrange about the money. Is is not *very, very* kind?

"I went to morning prayers at eight o'clock, and to Litany and Celebration at eleven, which I enjoyed so much; but I wondered what Nellie's enjoyment must be!—I cannot think what makes people so kind to me; I am sure I ought to be very thankful."

"Sept. 2nd, 1870.

"My darling Mother,—

"I went to Mr. C——, who sounded my lungs, and said 'he had never heard a better pair of bellows in his life,' so you may set your mind at rest about that. I am quite myself again, and go back to N—— next Friday. You will see some poetry I have sent.

I liked it so much, I thought you would like to read it too:—

- “ ‘Chasten me O Lord, but not in anger,
Chide me not in Thy displeasure sore ;
Spent with weeping, wearied out with langour,
Must I suffer more ?
- “ ‘Every night I lay me down with sorrow,
Every morning finds me drown'd in tears ;
Endlessly to-morrow, and to-morrow
Gone to months and years.
- “ ‘Yet through paths as sad, and hearts as hollow,
Thy Lord and Master went before ;
My disciple, is it hard to follow
With the cross *I* bore ?
- “ ‘No ; but should my spirit fading, dying,
Love that presence, visions-wearing aim,
Can I, in the grave's dark chamber lying,
Ev'n remember Him ?
- “ ‘Christian, by that low and narrow portal,
Not so sad, thy trembling soul should be ;
By the breath that made thy soul immortal,
He remembers thee.
- “ ‘Hush, my heart, the Lord has heard thy weeping,
Let Him stay thee as it likes Him best ;
None can harm thee now, sleeping or waking,
Labouring, or at rest.’ ”

She had a taste for sound poetry, especially those pieces in which the soul laments its present loneliness, and longs earnestly for the rest of Paradise. These were great favourites:—

- “ Far from my Heavenly home,
Far from my Father's breast ;
Fainting I cry, blest Spirit come,
And speed me to my rest.

"My spirit homeward turns,
And fain would thither flee ;
My heart, O Sion, droops and yearns,
When I remember thee.

"To thee, to thee, I press,
A dark and toilsome road ;
When shall I pass the wilderness,
And reach the saints' abode ?

"God of my life, be near,
On Thee my hopes I cast.
O guide me through the desert here
And bring me home at last."

"Oft in danger, oft in woe,
Onward, Christians, onward go ;
Bear the toil, maintain the strife,
Strengthened with the bread of life."

"Let not sorrow dim your eye,
Soon shall every tear be dry ;
Let not fear your course impede,
Great your strength if great your need.

"Let your drooping hearts be glad,
March in heavenly armour clad ;
Fight, nor think the battle long,
Soon shall victory wake your song.

"Onward, then, to glory move ;
More than conquerors ye shall prove,
Though opposed by many a foe,
Christian soldiers, onward go !"

A few days before leaving the home she wrote :—

"My dear Mother,—

"I shall be obliged to travel by Grantham, because I took my ticket there (a season-ticket). Do come if you can. I shall be so delighted to see you. I

am so happy here. I feel more and more disinclined to leave. The ladies all seem very sorry I am going."

Both father and mother met her at Grantham. The interview was short, but their hearts were rejoiced at her bright smile and the bloom of apparently returning health. She spoke with animation and gratitude of the kindness she had received. Miss Wilson wrote of her as being "a general favourite," and "how sorry all the ladies were "to lose her lively society."

She went back to N—— with a full determination, in God's strength, to do *well* and *earnestly* the work that was appointed her to do; though "not without some regret," as she said to a friend, that she was "sent back to the world rather than to join her sainted sister" in *that* rest which remaineth for the people of God.





CHAPTER X.

LAST YEAR AT N—COMMENCEMENT OF LAST ILLNESS.

“Hush, my soul, nor dare repine,
The time my God appoints is best ;
While here, to do His will be mine,
And His to fix my time of rest.”

THE train moved away ; an affectionate wave of the handkerchief, and she was gone—gone to commence her last year of work—gone with all her hopes and fears, and heart thirstings for the City out of sight—gone to sow the seeds of morality and religion in the young hearts committed to her care—go on thou dear one, for thy path will be like that of the just which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

The high value she had set on her religious privileges, did not, as it too often alas does, lessen with returning health ; but rather increased—having been as it were, on the border-land, and caught faint echoes of the Alleluia, she took up the Church’s longing strain, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true.”

“Her hands were but employed below,
Her heart was still with thee.”

The golden chain of heavenly love which united her to all her soul held dearest, still shed its brightness on her earthly occupations into which she entered with all earnestness of purpose. On October 15th, 1870, she writes :—

“I am so busy. I will tell you how I spend the day. From 8 a.m. to 9 I take the boys for a walk. From 12 to 1 I practise. On alternate weeks I take the walk from 4.30 to 5.30 and practise after tea ; but sometimes I practise before tea and go out with the boys after tea, taking my turn in charge until their bed-time. On a Wednesday afternoon (the half-holiday) I have a two hours' Music lesson. I am pretty well. Next Tuesday is the Festival of St. Luke, I should so much like to go to early Celebration ; but that is impossible. What a privilege it must be, to be able to attend all the Church's services—they seem to be so suited to every need. In nine weeks I shall be with you again. I am looking forward to it so much. Don't be long before you write, we treasure up your letters so much.”

“November, 1870.

“My own darling Mother,—

“Many, many happy returns of the day. I was so pleased with your letter written on ‘All Saints’ day’—I never enjoyed any Festival so much as I enjoyed *that*. I went to *no* service, but throughout the day I felt so joyous. I thought the First Lesson peculiarly beautiful, —‘The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God. In the sight of the wicked they seem to die, and their departure is taken for misery, but they are at peace.’

And in the Second Lesson St. Paul seemed to teach us that it was not only those who had suffered death for Christ's sake, but those who had run with patience the race set before them. I never noticed before how St. Paul seems to speak to everyone *individually* to run with patience the particular race He has set before him, whatever the thorns and stones may be that lie across the path. Darling Ellen seemed very near all day. How nice it was, we were really commemorating her, as well as any other 'saint' who has lived before. I wonder if she knew anything about it. I think she would, because it would be such a source of pleasure to her to be remembered. You know she was so afraid of being forgotten. It seems so nice to be able to tell you everything I *do* and *think* about. I always feel doubly thankful when I think of motherless girls; but those girls are more to be pitied who have not the fullest confidence in their mothers. I hope, if all be well, that in eight weeks I shall be with you. I wanted so much to send you a book, but it is the old tale—money runs short. If love could do anything for you, you would be richer than you are. I am afraid you will find this letter very stupid, but I have a bad headache. With very much love, and hoping I may write you many more birthday letters,

"I am,

"Your ever-loving Daughter,

"SARAH."

When the Christmas vacation came, she helped to decorate the church, and, with the exception of a cough

and an attack of rheumatism, which was only temporary, she appeared to enjoy her holidays. Yet the tone of her correspondence for the next few months evinced that she had an almost constant longing to join her departed sister. In one of her letters she says, "Do you remember last Ash Wednesday we came home to see Ellen, and I thought her so changed? What a comfort it is to think of her now at rest. She used to say it would be so long before she saw us again. I should think *now* she finds that time has ceased for her. How long the days are getting! When the green leaves come it will seem to bring us near home again. I do look forward so much, if all be well, to getting up early in the beautiful summer mornings, and sit on the lawn to work with you." "If all be well," she had said parenthetically. Was there an overshadowing presentiment that this bright vision might never be realised? a secret something that tolled the knell of this departed pleasure, for it had, in former days, been one of her home comforts to sit with me in the early sunshine of the warm summer mornings, when heart to heart was laid open, and sympathy and affection were not wanting. Alas! for me, the time never came. The summer returned, but, at the "getting up early," disease had struck its roots deeply into the loved form, and ere long would lay it in the silent tomb; but

"They live not long, nor die too soon,
Who live till life's great work is done."

"Life's great work" had become her first and supreme concern, therefore when she was called upon to give up earth's cherished hopes, she quietly and resignedly laid

them down at the foot of her Redeemer's cross, counting all but loss, so that she might be found of Him in peace. It had been one of her greatest delights to commemorate that dear Redeemer's dying love at the "*Early Celebration*." This was suddenly stopped, and regarding it she wrote:—

"Your sympathy was very comforting to us regarding our great disappointment. I am more grieved about it than ——— imagines me to be. We both attend midday celebration next Sunday; we can think of each other. I was so pleased with the snowdrops you sent me. I have put them with the one Nellie gave me when we came home to see her last Lent. I thought she looked then as pure as the snowdrops themselves; but what is she now? All purity."

"March 21st, 1871.

"My dear Father,—

"Many, many happy returns of the day. How quickly the years roll by! It scarcely seems possible that it can be a whole year since your last birthday. I know one cloud will rest upon the day. You will miss the good wishes of one of your children; but she may still know it is your birthday, and may perhaps be rejoicing that you are one year nearer the joyful reunion in Heaven.

"I think that we, as children, can never be grateful enough to you and mother for all the struggles and trials you have gone through for us. *We* can never repay you; but we know there is *One* who repays all his faithful servants. I am so sorry I cannot send you a small present, but I am so poor, so I know you will

excuse me, and take the will for the deed. We are going to be vaccinated to-morrow. I hope I shall come home at Easter; I shall under present circumstances, but I never feel quite sure till the time. You must write to me; you have not written one letter to *me* yet. Give my love to all, and, with best love and wishes,

“ I am,

“ Your loving Daughter,

“ SARAH.”

The small-pox was then raging in N——, and it was deemed advisable that she should be vaccinated. Her doctor said it was a wise precaution, as in case she had taken the infection, she would have stood a poor chance of recovery. After she had recovered from the effects of the vaccination she looked extremely well; she had a blooming colour, and was thought to be the picture of health and strength. But, alas! how deceptive was this appearance; it was only the calm preceding the storm; for undoubtedly insidious disease was secretly undermining the life-springs and sapping the foundation of every earthly hope. She spent her Easter holidays at home, full of life and spirits. In the drive to the station on her return, a heavy shower of rain came on, when it subsided and the sun shone, she pointed out a magnificent double rainbow. Most beautiful and brilliant did it look in its firmamental glory, and a fitting type of the greater glory she was ere long to share with the dear one, who was so constantly in her thoughts, when with rapt gaze, and adoring loving gratitude, they would behold the “Rainbow round about the Throne.” Being

Eastertide she very much wished to attend the early celebration the next morning, before commencing her work, this, however, was not permitted, and in alluding to it, she says, "I thought it would be so nice for me to go to church this morning. I should have been back for breakfast. I am so grievously disappointed. I feel rather downcast, but I mean to try and shake it off. I think the stone will be rolled away in God's good time." In this way she tried to turn all the events of life to a good account and to subject her own will to the will of God, believing, as she afterwards said, "That *every* circumstance in life is ordered for us by Infinite wisdom, though it may sometimes seem a heavy cross to bear." Her thoughts seem to have lived much in the spirit-land of the Blest, for although she was naturally reticent respecting herself, yet, now and then glimpses of her inner life appeared in her letters. In alluding to the anniversary of her sister's death, she wrote, "I seem to be living last year over again. Every thing seems to come so vividly before me; but though I have such a longing to see and speak to her again, I cannot help feeling very thankful that she is at *rest* away from all these troubles and cares. I wonder whether she has any perception of time, and knows a year has gone. If she has, I am sure it would cause her great joy to know she was one year nearer the time when she will see us all. I am going next Sunday to St. Mary's for the Early Celebration. I am looking forward to it so much. Cheer up dear mother, don't be downcast; remember it is 'Through much tribulation that we enter into the kingdom of heaven.' A few days later, when the trial was removed, she wrote, "I am so thankful, I consider it a direct answer to prayer.

"I thought so much of Ellen, yesterday, and of how she looked in her calm beauty after death. I am very unwell to-day. Another stomach attack."

At Ascensiontide she wrote:—

"I am now taking every morning, in warm milk, a spoonful of magnesia; Mr. W—— recommended it. I think it will stop these frequent stomach attacks.

"Yesterday evening I went to St. Matthew's; we had a very nice choral service and that beautiful anthem 'The Lord Remembers His Children.' I enjoyed it very much. Excuse my bad writing, I have vainly endeavoured to keep my hand steady, it shakes so, I can scarcely guide the pen."

"June 10th, 1871.

"My dear Mother,—

"I am quite as delighted the holidays are so near as you are. I am so tired of the boys. I am not very well again. I hope I shall get all right at home. We are very busy with the examination now. Miss L—— wants me to go to Scarborough again, but I shall not go, I must come home. We have been for such a long walk this afternoon, I am quite wearied out. I do hope we shall have some warm weather in the holidays. With much love,

"I am,

"Your loving Daughter,

"SARAH."

For some time her appetite had failed her, and it is evident she was very ill; but being accustomed to

speak so little of herself, no serious apprehensions were entertained. But as this "stomach attack" did not go off, her principal wished her to see a medical man, who gave it as his opinion that the stomach was very much affected, that she required rest and good nursing, and would, he thought, soon recover. Accordingly, it was at once decided that she should go home. So she wrote as follows :—

"June 15th, 1871.

"My dear Mother,—

"I have had another stomach attack, and it has left me rather weak and queer. Miss A—— says as we have no particular school work after to-morrow morning (Saturday), I had better come home; so will you meet me by the afternoon train? I start at two o'clock. I don't know what time I shall get in. I went to see Mr. W—— this morning. I will tell you what he said when I see you. I have no time now. Don't make any difference or trouble in any way. I am only coming out of the fuss of breaking up.

"I am,

"Your loving,

"SARAH."

Owing to an omission in the address of the post town, this letter did not arrive in due order, consequently, when she reached S—— station, there was no one to meet her. She walked on, expecting to meet the conveyance in a few minutes. It was raining fast, and her clothes soon became wet. When she had walked two or three miles, some carriers' vans passed her, but, as

her feet and the lower parts of her apparel were drenching wet, she dared not ride, so she walked the weary six miles, and reached home about seven o'clock on the 17th of June very weary, exhausted, and ill. Her first words on entering her home were, "Where is mother? tell her to come." In a moment I was by her side, and exclaimed, "My darling!" "Did you not get my letter, mother dear?" "No." "Oh, then, I am not well; take me to bed." In a few minutes she was comfortably in bed, and expressed her deep gratitude both by looks and words. "Oh, mother, I have so wanted *you*," with the great change in her appearance, whispered in my heart "She is come home to die." The other members of the family partook, more or less, of this feeling. For the first few hours, in her overflowing love, she appeared to forget her weakness. Her little sister, who was fondly attached to her, and who soon followed her, said, "Sarah dear, I will read you the text for the day. 'Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live.''" A week or two later she mentioned this as a striking coincidence. During the night she slept but little, and was at times delirious, yet her calm and peaceful face showed a mind serene and at rest. She remained in bed all the next day (Sunday) "to rest herself," as she said, from her weary walk. In the middle of the day, however, she looked so alarmingly ill that the family doctor was called in. He said she was seriously ill, and intimated that he feared her lungs were affected, though from the exhaustion she was suffering from her walk in the rain he could scarcely tell. It was a matter of wonder to him that she reached home at all, that he was not at all

surprised at her misdirecting her letter. He hoped the effects of the walk would only be temporary, but suggested that she should not return to N——, but that lighter work should be sought for. On how small a hinge do great events often turn! The omission in the address of the letter caused the long and unequal walk in the rain. The exhaustion consequent upon it served to nourish latent disease, which only waited the bidding to execute its commission to crop the lovely flower and lay it withering in the tomb. Touching these mysterious providences, well may we say with the Prophet Amos, "Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done (permitted) it?" That one so young, so sweet in disposition, so entirely devoted to her Saviour, so loved by her pupils and the circle in which she daily moved; who was the sunshine of her home and the joy of her parents' hearts, should be so prematurely, and in the midst of usefulness, cut down, might raise the question, "Wherefore hath the Lord done thus?" Did we not hear the Divine Voice in its own sovereignty assert, "My beloved is gone down into His garden to gather lilies?" Cant. vi. 2.



CHAPTER XI.

CLOSING DAYS—DEATH.

—“When he comes nearer to finish his race,
Like a fine setting sun, he looks richer in grace,
And foretells a bright hope at the end of his days
Of rising in brighter array.”

THE end hastened on with rapid strides. For the leading features of the closing days we must be chiefly indebted to notes which were taken at the time; though from the pressure of another trial, of another nature, these notes were not daily taken, consequently many of the sayings and doings were lost. But enough was preserved, to magnify the grace and love of that Saviour on whom alone Sarah's hopes for heaven were built.

She daily grew worse, and suffered much from deafness, which was a blessing in disguise to her, as everything of a painful nature was the more easily concealed from her. On the 2nd of July her medical attendant pronounced her to be in a “rapid consumption.”

July 5th. Our dear child is daily fading away. The truth seems dawning upon her, but it appears not to

distress her. She has several times said, that she thought it probable her lungs were affected, and that she did not think she should be so very sorry if it proved so.

July 7th. To-day we called in a physician, and his decision, though expected, fell upon our hearts like a heavy blow.

He said that her lungs were covered with tubercles : that in fact, only one little piece under one shoulder remained for her to breathe through—that this had been going on for some time—he could not point to the time *when* there were no tubercles. No doubt the fever of last year had helped to develope it, and the walk from the station in the rain, would serve to hasten the symptoms, which, under *any* circumstances, *would* earlier or later *certainly* have developed themselves. He said she must not walk at all, but must be carried up and down stairs and into the open air. Probably a month would see the *end*.

She had begged to be told the doctor's opinion, praying that nothing might be kept back. Her wish was complied with, though in accordance with the physician's order, in "modified" language as he said the recital if told abruptly, might have a tendency to hasten the symptoms. She bore the heavy tidings, only as a believer could do. There was no passionate outburst of feeling, no murmuring, no complaining, no visible change in the appearance, save a little heightened colour, and a steady earnest look from the expressive eye into the face of the speaker, as if to ascertain whether the whole truth was being told. Then she wished to be left quite alone for ten minutes. What passed in that short interval no human pen may write—its record is on

high. When those who loved her most returned to her side, they found her calm and quiet, betraying no mental signs of distress. A day or two previously she had said, "I should not be *very* sorry to pass away, should you?"

"8th. This has been a day of great weakness. S—— called her youngest sister to her side, and said, "Do you *know* that I shall never get well?" "Yes," "Shall you miss me very much?" "Yes, shall you be sorry to leave us?" "Yes, very much." Then she gathered the little head in her lap and both wept. Ah! they did not know that for them the separation would be short indeed, that a few more rising and setting suns, and the tears for them, would for ever be wiped away.

Sarah was particularly fond of the Epistles of St. Peter and spoke of that sweet passage as having been most consoling to her, "Unto you, therefore, which believe He is precious."

To-day, at her request, I began to read these Epistles to her, and continued to do so until the guiding star of the Word led her to her Saviour's presence.

"9th. To-day, when speaking of the solemn reality of her position, she said, "It seems *rather sad!* and yet, *not* so very sad. I suppose the sadness will wear off. If I had not made preparation before, I could not have done it now. It would have had to be; but *that* is already done. Oh! if I could make all the world hear *me*, mother dear, I would tell them not to put it off until sickness, and death. I am sure they cannot prepare *then*."

My dear young friends, who read these lines, listen to this voice from the tomb. It speaks, and speaks to you. "Prepare to meet thy God." Do it *now*. Listen

again to the voice—"I could not have done it *now*. It would have had to be—it would have had to be!" Awful words!—a soul lost, will have to *be* a soul lost for *ever*.

"Infinite years in torment it must spend,
And never, never, never have an end."

But it is not yet too late. Listen while yet the voice of mercy calls you. Flee to Jesus. Make Him your friend, as Sarah did; then, when your heart and flesh faint and fail like hers, He will be the strength of your heart, and your portion for ever. It had been impressed upon her mind, she said, during the past year, that she "should soon follow Ellen, then it would be still, Ellen and Sarah," the old household phrase. When she had recovered from the fever of last year, she tried to dismiss the thought; still it followed her, and she could not altogether shake it off. She had frequently longed to lie beside dear Nellie.

One fine calm evening previously to seeing the physician, she wished to go out for a walk, and leaning on my arm, without saying a word, she bent her feeble steps to the hallowed spot. She had to rest by the way, and it was with great difficulty she reached the wished-for spot. A chair was procured, and a glass of water, for she was quite exhausted; then she sat at the head of the grave, and with *wistful, longing* looks, watched me strew flowers above the quiet sleeper. Her own loving hands had done this whilst she could, and she one day remarked to her little sister, "You will soon have to lay flowers upon two graves."

Her many kind and sympathising friends, now fully

aware of her danger, wrote her Christian letters, full of hopes of immortality, thus trying to sustain her faith and fortitude; and it was touching to see her write her *last* letter to her Principal. The characters were all irregular, as if impressed by the stamp of death, and the sweet childlike simplicity of satisfaction when she had done, showed that all her powers were fast-failing.

The cough and deafness both increased. Many young friends visited her, and to one who said she hoped she would be better, she emphatically said, "Don't say *so*, I shall never be better, but I am not afraid to die." Another friend said she hoped the warm weather might do her good. She said, "No; I can never get better; people in a consumption never do." She was able, as her young and beautiful life sped swiftly away, to make remarks like these, without the least exhibition of sorrow or regret. Nothing earthly seemed to trouble her, excepting her mother's forced absence, which was a great trial, and caused *both* to sip afresh at the cup of sorrow, the just penalty awarded to man's disobedience, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake, in *sorrow* shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."

In her days of health she had ever regarded the Holy Communion as the Church's highest act of worship on earth, and now, cut off from the Sanctuary, she earnestly desired to receive the sacred emblems of her Saviour's dying love, in her sick chamber. Accordingly we find:—

"July 22nd. Our dear one received the Lord's Supper in her sick room. It was a solemn time, and we could

not help comparing it with *the* similar occasions witnessed in that very room only a few months before."

"25th. St. James' day, and a half holiday enabled the dear sufferer to enjoy the society of her mother. It was spent so far as her strength permitted, in turning over the pages of a beautifully illustrated volume of "Bunyan's Pilgrim." Noting his progress from the "City of Destruction," to the gates of the "Celestial City." This "Pilgrim of the Night," who was even now passing through the "Land of Beulah," already catching snatches of the Songs of the Blessed, was deeply interested, and enabled to take in from the picture, *what* her weakened powers could not by a mental effort have been otherwise presented to her. A painful experience has convinced the writer, that *they* whom nature has gifted with the powers of the pencil, might do much in this way to sooth the languishing and dying pillow. It was a striking coincidence, that pictures were among the *last* things to interest both Ellen and Sarah, their powers to soothe, surpassed at times, that of the living voice.

"July 28th. Our dear one is in the last stage of weakness. Wearisome days and nights are appointed her. She suffers greatly from her throat and tongue which are in a fearful state. She can take nothing but liquids; yet no murmur escapes her lips. In the early part of this evening she wished to be carried out of doors to her favourite spot on the lawn, where she had loved to look at the flowers, caring, as she said, "for nothing but the flowers," those sweet emblems of the flowers which bloom eternal in the Paradise of God. To her they seemed the last link, binding earth and heaven together. She was soon carried indoors and was never again taken out,

until carried to her final resting place. An oppressive restlessness, and a far-away look, for a time, took possession of her. Her brother brought pictures; but they failed to interest, and her only request was "tell mother to come." The next day was Saturday, a day to which, during the weeks of her suffering she had looked forward with pleasure, because she could "have mother's company *all day*." This morning brought with it relief in the symptoms, she could talk with comparative ease, and the two conversed long together, laying open heart to heart, and taking stock of each other's spiritual growth. About four o'clock she was carried down stairs. Her throat and tongue were much better, and she tried to take some tea. Laying aside her natural reticence, she talked freely about herself, about her *hopes* and *fears* and present *peace*. In contrasting herself with Ellen, she remarked "Ellen was depressed, but I am sometimes afraid *mine* is apathy."

"No darling, if it were you would not feel *thus*, and having given yourself to Christ, your safety is as secure as the rock on which it is built; though your perception of it may sometimes be dimmed, by reason of the bodily sufferings which prevent you doing the 'thing which you would.' He bids you '*Rest* in His love' and with self-appropriation exclaim, 'My beloved is mine and I am His, He feedeth me among the lilies.' 'As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the Sons.'" For some minutes the conversation turned on the superior beauty and loveliness of the Redeemer, until our hearts, like the two Emmaus travellers "burned within us" and from the sweet imagery, in which He recommends Himself to His

Spouse, the Church, we deduced her '(Sarah's) *oneness* with Him, which *oneness* could not be affected by frames and feelings.

She said, that whilst at Scarborough last year, she had much enjoyed reading a book which explained the imagery used in the Canticles. From its treasury she had previously chosen the text for her memorial card, "Until the day break and the shadows flee away."

The "Family above" was the next topic, until she became exhausted, and her favourite lines were quoted,—

"Who suffer with their Master here,
Shall soon before His face appear,
And by His side sit down.
To patient faith the prize is sure,
And all that to the end endure
The cross, shall wear the crown."

A small bed had been placed in the sitting room upon which she was now laid to rest. It was a rainy evening and she said,—"How nice the fire looks," so it was stirred into a cheerful blaze. She soon got up to sit by it, but sickness came on and she was carried up stairs quite exhausted, and whilst being undressed her head sank upon my bosom and she fell asleep, and excepting when disturbed by the cough, slept soundly for several hours.

For the closing scene we must refer to the journal.

July 30th, 1871. At five o'clock this morning exhausting sickness and violent pains in the stomach came on. About six o'clock she drank a little tea, and went to sleep again. At seven she wished for her breakfast, and took some coffee. As she did not seem to wish for more sleep, the usual preparations for the

day were gone through with no more apparent fatigue than was usual. The portion of Scripture read was Part 1, Cor. vi., "And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." "God hath raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power." "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's." Whilst prayer was being offered, her countenance changed into a deathly pallor, which was soon followed by severe pains and sickness. At noon her doctor was sent for, and applied remedies which he hoped would give relief; but, alas! no; she could not retain the medicines given. Her eyes sparkled with an unnatural lustre, and the death lineaments were stamped upon her brow. As the afternoon advanced, her pains increased. She was in mortal agony with the "King of Terrors." It was impossible to move her in any direction without causing the most acute anguish. Her cries of "Oh! mother, darling, I can't bear it," and once, "Oh! mother darling, if this pain continues I shall go mad," were heartrending. The family assembled downstairs to pray, and in frantic grief I knelt beside her bed, and in bitter anguish of soul entreated the God of Love that, if it were "possible," this bitter "cup might pass from her," or that He would enable her to drink it. Again her doctor was consulted, and he administered something more powerful than before,

which was to be repeated every hour. Slowly and sadly the hours sped on, those sacred Sabbath hours, and with them the acute pain very gradually subsided. But the eyes became more clear and glassy, the voice sharp and quick, and the whole appearance indicated speedy dissolution. She earnestly besought me not to leave her for the "Evening Service" attendance, and when the note arrived granting leave of absence from duty, she said, with a look of anxious inquiry, "What does it say?" "That I may stay, dear." Instantly the look of anxiety dissolved into one of quiet satisfaction and calm thankfulness. By six o'clock a coldness was gradually seizing her feet, and whilst the bells were summoning the worshippers to the House of Prayer, she wished to be got out of bed, and was supported whilst it was made. Very soon her extremities became cold, and the death-sweat overspread her whole body. Texts of Scripture were quoted, as she could bear them, and the silent, ardent heartbreathings of all present were that the Lord would deal gently with her whilst in the "swelling of Jordan."

About 8.30 p.m. her doctor said that a collapse had set in, and that unless her extremities speedily gathered warmth, death would ensue before morning.

"Mother, what does Mr. J—— say?" was soon her inquiry. "That you are worse than you were in the morning, dear." "I know that. *Is that all*, mother darling?" "He says, dear, that you are nearing *Home*." "What a blessing," she replied. To her brother she said, "T——dear, Mr. J—— says I shall not live long. *I am so glad*, aren't you?" About half an hour after, Dr. C——, who was the officiating minister

for the day, saw her. She talked to him most cheerfully, and when he remarked that she, though absent, had formed one of the great congregation that day, she was able to tell him that it was only seven weeks since she had done so bodily, he prayed with her, and then left her. Before long, when, as it seemed, her mind took in more fully her actual condition, and when, to her question, "Is there danger?" T—— said, "There is danger," she expressed a strong desire to have the Holy Communion administered: Dr. C——, who had been sent for, was afraid her strength might fail before the end of the service, but she assured him she "was strong enough." So from 10 to 10.30 p.m. the sacred emblems of her Saviour's dying love were administered to this, His dying child. As this Holy Communion had been her comfort in life, so it was her comfort in death. It was her last Food as she crossed the boundary-line between earth and the abodes of the spirits of "just men made perfect." Father, mother, and eldest brother communicated with her, all the family except the two youngest being, at her earnest request, present. It was very touching to hear her say, "Now all get your books and find your places. Give me my Prayer-book, F——, dear. Now, mother, dear, prepare the table, and father, dear, kneel against the bed."

When the solemn service commenced, she went steadily through the Confession, word by word, with a firmer voice than we were able to do. She held firmly her death-cold hands for the hallowed bread, and passed it to her lips without help; the same, with the slightest assistance, the sacred cup. But before the

service was quite finished, she closed her prayer-book, and laid it by her side. She had done with it for ever. Then, with clasped hands and eyes uplifted, she remained silent to the end. It was a time never to be forgotten, and we felt that

"The chamber where the good man meets his fate
Is privileged beyond the common walks of life,
Close on the verge of heaven."

She continued to talk up to twelve o'clock. She requested T—— to stand at her left hand, to wipe away the perspiration. "Mother was to stand at her right hand," to fan her face, and the other members of her family were to remain near her, for whom she had constantly a cheerful word.

She gave small presents to each. To her eldest brother she gave a small manual of devotion, saying, "You will use it, won't you? *I* have used it." He said, "I will use it, dear." On seeing another brother much distressed, she said, "Poor T——, won't you come and kiss me?"

At another time, "F——, dear, do you remember your dream of the bridge?" "Yes, dear, and I dare say Ellen will come to meet you." This was an allusion to a dream the eldest sister had related to her some time before, in which she and Sarah, she thought, had to cross a narrow bridge, so very narrow that she was afraid. Sarah was to go over first, and as soon as she had fairly started, Ellen came and led her over, leaving the eldest behind.

Then, "F——, don't you remember Miss A—— singing on a Sunday night 'Remember now thy

Creator,' and how I used to like it. Won't she think of me when she sings it now!" Then, "Mother, *you* must *keep* talking to me," and so, as the sweet life ebbed away, I tried to soothe it with drops from the Fountain of Living Waters, occasionally varying it with a verse of a suitable hymn. The last quotation was—

"Bright angels are from glory come,
They're round my bed and in my room;
They wait to bear my spirit home,
All is well—all is well."

To the question, "Will you, darling, if you are permitted, be a ministering spirit to me?" she replied, "Yes, I *will*," and to the half-expressed desire to depart with *her*, she emphatically said, "But, mother, there are the two little children!"

Once or twice she asked for wine, and lastly, for a little coffee. By-and-bye she wished for water to bathe her face, and insisted on sitting up to do it herself, as she had always done. For some seconds she bathed her face, then brushed her nails, whilst we supported her on each side. Then she requested that her pillows might be smoothed, and her hair brushed. After this she talked but little.

Occasionally her mind wandered back to her late employment, and she would speak as if to her pupils. Once she complained that she could not fix her mind on "good thoughts; she could think of other things," but added, "not during the Holy Communion." She was reminded that she was yet in the body; when it was laid aside, its infirmities would be laid aside. After

this the breathing became more and more difficult and laboured, and the death-set features showed that the end drew near. The last words audibly uttered were, "No, thank you," to the question, would she like a little water, shewing that she was perfectly sensible. At her request the window had been opened, and as the midnight breezes fanned her temples, it was difficult to say whether she slept or not, so calm and peaceful appeared the departing spirit. Now and then a movement of the eye seemed to indicate wakefulness. Once her lips moved as if in prayer, or speaking to some one, but the living voice had fled to be heard on earth no more until the resurrection morning.

She lay in this state of semi-stupor until 1.33 a.m., July 31st, 1871, when she quietly, without a struggle or a groan, entered into rest. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." On August 3rd she was laid beside her sleeping sister.

"Thou art gone to the grave, we no longer behold thee,
Nor tread the rough paths of the world by thy side ;
He gave thee, He took thee, and He will restore thee,
And death has no sting since the Saviour hath died."



CHAPTER XII.

ALBERTA'S CHILDHOOD—ALARMING ATTACK OF ILLNESS
—BEGINNING OF LAST TEDIOUS ILLNESS.

“ They are going, only going,
Jesus called them long ago ;
All the wintry time they're passing
Softly as the falling snow,
When the violets in the springtime
Catch the azure of the sky,
They are carried out to slumber
Sweetly where the violets lie.”

SCARCELY had the echo of Sarah's dying voice sank in the peaceful grave, ere the Hand of Infinite Wisdom and Love saw fit to repeat the blow, and assert His sovereign right to gather another household treasure from the earthly to the Heavenly home.

Alberta's childhood's days passed happily away, being, however, occasionally marred by those hidden springs of the human heart, which the great adversary knows, too well, how to unlock. But God's blessing rested on a training, which was ever vigilant to check the progress of evil, and strengthen the aspirations after the higher life.

When she was seven years old, she had a severe attack of measles, which brought on an affection on the brain which endangered her life. After some days of acute suffering, and, contrary to all human expectation, the disease was arrested, and she recovered, though, probably, some latent remains of the insidious disease were not thoroughly eradicated, and only awaited the hand of time, and favourable circumstances, to develop them. Even at this early age her desire for prayer on her own behalf was remarkable. She appeared to think that what was asked for, *could* and *would* be granted. On one occasion, when I had prayed that the will of the Lord might be done, rather than for her restoration, at the close, she said, "Mother, you didn't pray that I might get better." Shall I pray for *that*? "Yes." Her wish was complied with, and in a few hours there was a change for the better. When the paroxysms of pain had been alleviated, it was a pleasing task to watch beside the sick child. She was never weary of hearing Scripture or other instructive stories, and astonished her friends by the intimate knowledge she evinced of all the books the house contained, which came within the range of her childhood's capabilities.

She had a strong appreciation of the beautiful, and a lesson, clothed with emblems of the grand, either from nature or art, was sure to win its way to her affection and her memory. Indeed, most of her early lessons were given in this way. A pretty ribbon, or an object seen in the walk, would form the text for a grammar or geography lesson, and she would eagerly drink in every word, and doubtless never forget it. This mode of in-

struction strikes the senses, and opens the understanding to receive deeper truths.

It would be difficult to define when first she savingly believed. Truthfulness and honesty were conspicuous traits in her character. Frequently would she stop reciting anything she had heard, lest, as she said, she should not say the *exact* words, so careful was she not to make additions to current reports. Her sensitive honesty was sometimes painful, as if she took a pin, or the smallest thing, which might have been considered household property, and free to *all*, she was sure to come running to mention what she had done, and so draw down upon herself a gentle reproof for being *over nice*.

Her attendance at school was considerably interrupted, often in consequence of her own delicate health, and for a long period in waiting upon her sister Ellen.

As the family returned from E——'s funeral, Alberta fancied she heard "Angles' music," and "Ellen's voice amongst them." So strong was the impression that she frequently mentioned it in her last illness, adding, "When dear Sarah was buried, I listened for it again, but could not hear it."

After Ellen's death she attended school more regularly until the two last years of her life, when she complained that the necessary noise of the schoolroom affected her head so much that it was painful to do anything. Of her feelings on this point she shall speak for herself in the following note:—

"I feel very dull and miserable now they are gone away [her brothers and sisters]. I know I should try

and be bright, and make the others bright; but I feel it too miserably to talk about.

“We begin school on Wednesday, *which is a very great trial*. I really cannot give myself up to work again; but it will have to be done. I cannot bear to think of it; but I shall have to *pray* and guard against it. It is better for us to pray, and give the whole matter up to God.”

Another private paper bears date “Nov. 6th, 1872. ‘Ye shall have a song in the night, as when some holy solemnity is kept.’ Ah, thought I, we are apt to fancy ourselves in the blackness of darkness when any sorrow or bereavement comes over us, and yet our good God sends us a song in the night. The poor shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem lay watching their flocks by night, when all seemed dark and dreary; but suddenly a light shone upon them, and they heard sweet music in the air, even sweeter than that which I hear now.”

Even if this extract were a borrowed one (it may have been), still its holy breathings bespeak a heart whose chords had been touched with Divine love, and were longing to expand themselves in the ceaseless music of everlasting song.

When Sarah died, she had a strong impression that she would be the next to go. She treasured up every memento of the dear departed with an almost religious care. She said that for a long time after her death, she read daily, and derived great comfort from 1 Thess. iv. 14—18. “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God

bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." She took a daily account of herself, which she requested might not be read, but buried after her death. Her devotional habits increased, she seemed not to mind being found upon her knees in prayer, and the thought was often suggested:—Can this be the religion of a child? Is her Heavenly Father preparing her for some wise purpose we cannot see?

In the Autumn of 1872 she became very unwell. Her buoyancy of spirits seemed gone; she lost interest in the family surroundings, was dull and seldom spoke at meals, except when spoken to. Her appetite and memory both failed, and we became anxious on her account, although, excepting a cough which troubled her, there seemed no cause for serious alarm.

She was fond of music, for which she had a talent, and continued her lessons up to the end of the year.

She appeared to enjoy the Christmas family gathering, joining in the carols of the season, and as 1873 was ushered in, joined with them in singing the Hymn:—

"Days and moments quickly flying,
Blend the living with the dead;

Soon will you and I be lying,
Each within our narrow bed.

"Soon our souls to God, who gave them,
Will have sped their rapid flight ;
Able now by grace to save them,
Oh, that while we can, we might !

"Jesus, Infinite Redeemer,
Maker of this mighty frame ;
Teach, oh, teach us to remember,
What we are, and whence we came.

"Whence we came, and whither wending,
Soon we must through darkness go ;
To inherit bliss unending,
Or eternity of woe.

"As a shade our life is fleeting,
Swifter than a dart it flies ;
Hallow Lord our new year's greeting,
Help our weakness, make us wise.

"Wise that we our days may number,
Strive and wrestle with our sin ;
Stay not in our work, nor slumber,
Till Thy glorious rest we win."



CHAPTER XIII.

INCREASING ILLNESS—HOPES AND FEARS.

The snowdrop peeps,
The loved one droops,
The blackbird sings,
But earthly things
Lose fast their hold.

IN the early part of January, 1873, Alberta's health failed so perceptibly, that medical aid was sought. Her doctor said she was very delicate, and needed great care. He gave her medicine, and prescribed diet, and exercise in the open air, so far as the weather and her strength would permit.

On the second Sunday in January, she went to Church, and took her accustomed place in the choir, for the last time. The Sunday following, she felt too ill to leave the house. She continued her gentle out-door walks up to the 28th, when she was so weak and exhausted, that she could only go for a very short

distance, and that, not without material help. She never went out again.

For many days and weeks there was no apparent change, until we find :—

Feb. 9th, 1873. Dear A—— is very weak. Her doctor fears the brain is diseased. The child is very ill, and the silent cry from my riven heart has many times gone up to-day :—"O Lord look upon my child." And surely the prayer was heard, for in the evening she mentioned, that, though feeling very ill, when she was left alone in the morning ; yet when the sun shone into her chamber, it cheered and comforted her, and brought to her mind the beautiful lines which she kept repeating over and over again :—

"O for the pearly gates.
O for the golden floor,
O for the Sun of Righteousness
Which setteth nevermore."

10th. She awoke this morning feeling very ill, but said she felt peaceful, and that she *did* feel peaceful in a morning. That she had learned to value her Bible more than she did before, and that she thought her tastes and feelings had differed from those of her companions generally.

11th. She said she had had no nice thoughts to-day excepting this ; that feeling very weak when she awoke in the morning and thinking that there was a weary day before her, the thought occurred "As thy days so shall thy strength be." The same thought occurred again when walking down stairs.

Thus in this young heart had lain hidden the germs of deep Christian experience, waiting only the hour of

trial, that peculiar soil, in which the plant of grace thrives best, to bud forth and bear fruit to the praise and glory of the Great Husbandman. For many days her Father's hand was laid so gently and lightly upon her, that it was difficult to conceive what His will would be concerning her. Whilst our human love would have forestalled the Divine appointment and spared the sufferer many months of anguish by translating her to His Eternal Kingdom, or raising her to health and strength, He was by this gentle process preparing her to glorify Him in the furnace of affliction.

During this apparent standstill, there was at times a strong desire for restoration to health, and an ardent clinging to earthly affection; whilst the great exhaustion caused by being carried downstairs only, and laid on the couch, where she would lie for an hour or so with closed eyes, utterly prostrated, convinced us that this might not be. For the different phases of the mysterious disease, and for the spiritual growth under them, we must be pardoned for quoting the notes, taken at different times, and particularly so, for inserting a paragraph, the desires of which were strikingly fulfilled, thus proving that ours is a God-hearing and answering prayer.

March 17th. Alberta is very ill. She is gradually growing worse. My own soul has been much agonised for her lately. Truly have I, as it were, travailed again in birth for her. Seeing her clinging to life, and feeling as I do, that this *may*, and probably *will*, be a "sickness unto death," I cannot but feel great anxiety, that, if our Father is about to call His child home, He will, in His infinite mercy, wean her from her earthly

affections; give her the Holy Spirit to apply the Saviour's blood; show her the incomparable glory reserved for His people, and make her willing to depart if it shall please Him to call her hence. Also, that the earthly tabernacle may be gently taken down, and that no pains of death may, at her last hour, fall from Him. Even so, Father, may it seem good in Thy sight.

18th. Our medical man confirmed our worst fears. He thinks there is disease of brain. She suffers much from her head. In the course of our reading to-day, occurred this comforting passage—"I am gradually losing all mental suffering; earth is fading away, and the glorious realities of eternity are drawing upon me like the breaking of a summer morning."

19th. She has not left her room at all to-day, but was laid upon the couch for two or three hours, just for a change; the being carried down stairs has for some time past caused such extreme prostration, that her doctor thought it had better be discontinued. Every member of her family is invited to join in asking God—

1st. That if our Father be about to call our dear Alberta hence, He will give her a sense of sin forgiven through the Saviour's blood, by the application of the Holy Spirit.

2nd. That her earthly affections may be loosened, and that she may be able to say, "Thy will be done."

3rd. That if, consistent with the Divine will, a foretaste of the unspeakable glories of heaven may be given her, that she may be willing to depart. This to be asked for in humble reliance on our blessed Lord's own words, "That if two of you shall agree, as touching anything

that they shall ask, in shall be done for them of My Father which is in Heaven," Matt. xviii., 19.

Reading, which had been her delight, had now to be laid almost entirely aside. She could bear only a few verses of Scripture to be read at a time. She took entirely to her bed; her head could not bear the slightest movement; sounds of any kind caused exquisite suffering; her room was partially darkened, and hers henceforth became a living death.





CHAPTER XIV.

CONFINED TO HER ROOM ENTIRELY—WEANING FROM
EARTH—LIGHT AND SHADE.

Winter is past, the spring is here,
She gains no strength our hearts to cheer ;
Her spirits languish day by day,
We feel that she must pass away.

BUT in that shaded room were gleams of light and peace, as when once the command went forth, "Let there be light, and there was light," so was it now. Though a confirmed invalid and confined to her bed, she said, "I have had more peace since my affliction than I had before ; I enjoy my Bible more, and see more of its meaning."

March 30th. Her doctor said there had been no improvement during the past week. She was no better—her case was not hopeless, but the symptoms were not good, and served to prove that the brain is affected, and that at times she is not altogether responsible for her actions. The restlessness is excessive, inducing great irritability whilst the paroxysms last. After a suffering

she said she was pleased to feel that she was lying on the same bed on which her sisters had suffered and died. That thought often comforted her when she felt unusually weak and exhausted. That she did not feel half so afraid to die now they had gone before her. It was as if they had gone to prepare the way.

April 11th, Good Friday. Once more her bodily health seems at a standstill, but her spiritual strength increases. We have read to-day, as her strength would bear it, of those untold sufferings of our adorable Redeemer, as brought before us in the portions of Scripture appointed by our beloved Church to be read.

In the evening she remarked that death and the grave did not appear half so terrible now that Jesus had died and lain in the grave; he had taken away the sting of death, yet still there was in us a clinging to life. She thought the dying saint—when departing, and unable to tell his sorrowing friends—had a glimpse of Heaven. In support of this, she was told the following incident—“A good man was departing, his friends were surrounding his bed comforting him, when he suddenly lifted up his finger and pointing upwards, said, ‘Hush! there is Heaven!’ and died.” She said, “O, how beautiful!” The whole tone of her conversation to-night showed that earth is losing its hold.

Easter Sunday. She listened with apparent thankfulness to the portions of Scripture appointed for the day, and also to the concluding scenes in the life of F. B——, in which she has been deeply interested. In the evening twilight she talked of Heaven. Earth seemed fading and Heaven opening. Great physical restlessness followed; after which she slept for several hours.

April 18th. Dear A—— is very ill. Incessant sickness and restlessness have continued for many hours.

25th. The sickness on the third day yielded to the constant application of ice, but the lowness increases, with an increasing desire to get better, which is rendered all the more painful from the assured conviction that she can never recover, and yet, perhaps, to repress that desire would be to take away her every hope, and induce despondency. What need to pray that faith fail not.

26th. The prostration was so great that it seemed as if every hour might be her last, and yet, there was a feeling that the gold was not refined; that the wheat, though in the ear, was not fully ripened; and that He who had begun a good work in her would surely complete it. That He would not wrench her from all she held most dear ere He had weaned her affections from earth, and created in her a longing desire to depart and be with Christ. As we proceed in our narrative we shall observe how literally all this was fulfilled.

28th. The exhausting sickness has passed away. To-day her doctor said, that if the head symptoms could be relieved, he should yet have hopes.

For some time after this she seemed to hang in the balance, there was no apparent change. Excessive weakness and restlessness were her daily portion; yet the probability that she might never recover dawned upon her, and there was an increasing relish for spiritual converse. She was particularly fond of hymns, and during the long evenings, when all nature was joyous and buoyant with life, she would lie quietly in her shaded room listening to their recitation. She liked those best which bespoke the Christian's triumph over death, and

his entrance into life, amidst the hallelujahs of the angelic host, tuning their harps of gold. About this time she spoke very decidedly of the comfort she received from the visits of her minister, the Rev. J. D. G——. On one occasion, the sickness and death of Lazarus was the subject, and she said, "He made me feel so comfortable." She loved to be talked to about the employments of the blessed, and said, she "often wished to be at rest, but at other times she felt a clinging to life, especially when she heard the children at play." In order to relieve the tedious monotony of her life, a mirror was frequently placed so as to bring distant objects within the compass of her vision, as she lay in bed. Sometimes she watched the children at play, at other times her eye rested upon the heaven-turned spire of her beloved Church. Then she would look at "the slowly-setting sun" sinking majestically to his rest, as she listened eagerly to the well-known lines of Dr. Watts, where he compares the end of a Christian to a

"Fine setting sun," who looks "richer in grace
And foretells a bright hope at the end of his days
Of rising in brighter array."

The routine of a sick-room affords little variation, one day is a fair specimen of its predecessor. In Alberta's case, the same hymns were repeated daily, the same heavenly subjects talked over; but she never forgot the hour of prayer and reading the Scripture. She liked to have it in the early twilight. She could only listen to a few verses at once, and to short prayers, but she wished those prayers to embody her present wants, and that very minutely. She seemed to think that what was asked for would be received. Thus, while the out-

ward man was perishing, the inner man was being renewed day by day.

On the 24th of May she completed her fourteenth year; but she was fast out-growing her natural years. Her mind was acquiring a maturity of thought which far outstripped the limits of her natural life. Birthdays had always been a source of pleasure to her; and on their successive return to the members of her family she always presented some little love-token. The little presents she received on this, her last birthday, pleased her; although her physical restlessness throughout the day was most distressing.

May 27th. She was much interested this evening in a conversation on our Blessed Lord's second coming. Latterly she has spoken of death as very probable; she does not seem to meet it with fear or dread, rather the reverse, and speaks of the joy of meeting with her sisters, and of being for ever with the Lord, with no possibility of any more death.

June 15th. (Sunday). Alberta has suffered much to-day, and dreaded an application which it was hoped would give her relief. In the moments of fear and dread this text came to her mind, "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain thee."

19th. She has been low and depressed all day. Her brother was home for his vacation, and she said she felt such a longing to be out and about with him, as she used to be.

For many days after this her life again seemed to hang in the balance. She was extremely ill, and the restlessness and cerebral excitement seemed to increase with the decrease of bodily strength; and my anguished

heart was fain to relieve itself as the woman of Canaan :
“Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on my daughter.”

23rd. Another medical man said to-day, “The case was hopeless. It was slow disease of the brain. The fits of restlessness proceeded from that cause. She might continue to languish for weeks, or even months, yet she was liable to change for the worse at any time ;” and he was rather surprised that there was not more delirium.

24th. She has complained of great mental depression.

27th. This has been a day of extreme suffering (Sunday), which, she said, she could not have borne had it not been for the prayer that was unceasingly offered up for her.

When these paroxysms of extreme suffering abated, she would lie for hours, and even days, with closed eyes, in a most passive state, in a kind of living death, taking no notice of her surroundings, yet always willing and anxious for prayer, which she would ask for many times a day. Of her it might truly be said, “Behold, she prayeth.” In moments of severest anguish, when heart and flesh were ready to faint and fail, when nothing earthly could give ease or comfort, she prayed.

“Prayer is the Christian’s vital breath,
The Christian’s native air ;
His watchword in the hour of death,
He enters heaven with prayer.”



CHAPTER XV.

HOPE DEFERRED — A PAUSE — INCREASING ILLNESS —
FIRST COMMUNION—SECOND COMMUNION—CLOSE OF
THE YEAR.

When languor and disease invade
This trembling house of clay,
'Tis sweet to look beyond the cage,
And long to soar away.

THE summer with its brightness had faded into the yellow tints of autumn; wearily had the days passed on in an almost unbroken sameness, till the nervous system had become so depressed and sensitive, that her doctor deemed it advisable to change the position of her bed, and admit more light into the sick room, thinking that by degrees the energies might be aroused and the torpor arrested in its progress, in which case there might still be hope. And so for awhile the *star* of hope *did* gleam faintly on the weary watchers of the drooping child, on whom neither change nor light produced any favourable effect; on the contrary, the latter seemed most painfully to affect her, so that during the pause

which ensued there was nothing left but to *watch* and *wait* and *pray*.

Towards the end of October she became much worse in every respect. Excruciating pains, with exhausting sickness, followed by excessive weakness, indicated but too plainly that the apparent lull had only been a preparatory step to the onward march of dissolution.

During the paroxysms of pain she often asked for prayer, and frequently expressed a desire to depart and be with Christ. The following hymns, which were repeated to her daily, formed part of the food of her soul :—

“ Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the raging billows roll,
While the tempest still is high ;
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past ;
Safe into the haven guide,
O receive my soul at last.

“ Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee ;
Leave, ah ! leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me.
Thou of life the fountain art,
Freely let me take of Thee ;
Spring Thou up within my heart,
Rise to all eternity.”

“ Come, let us join our cheerful songs
With angels round the throne ;
Ten thousand, thousand are their tongues,
But all their joys are one.

“ Worthy the Lamb that died !” they cry,
“ To be exalted thus :”

"Worthy the Lamb!" our lips reply,
"For He was slain for us."

"Jesus is worthy to receive
Honour and power divine;
And blessings, more than we can give,
Be, Lord, for ever Thine.

"The whole creation join in one,
To bless the Sacred Name
Of Him that sits upon the throne,
And to adore the Lamb."

"Hark! the song of jubilee,
Loud as mighty thunders roar,
Or the fulness of the sea
When it breaks upon the shore;
'Hallelujah! for the Lord
God Omnipotent shall reign;
Hallelujah!' let the word
Echo round the earth and main.

"Hallelujah!" Hark! the sound,
From the centre to the skies,
Wakes above, beneath, around,
All creation's harmonies.
See Jehovah's banners furl'd,
Sheathed His sword: He speaks—'tis done,
And the kingdoms of this world
Are the kingdoms of His Son.

"He shall reign from pole to pole,
With illimitable sway;
He shall reign when, like a scroll
Yonder heavens have pass'd away.
Then the end:—beneath His rod
Man's last enemy shall fall;
Hallelujah! Christ in God,
God in Christ is all in all."

"Vital spark of heavenly flame,
Quit, oh, quit this mortal frame ;
Hoping, lingering, dying, crying,
Oh, the pain—the bliss of dying !
Cease, fond nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life.

"Hark ! they whisper, angels say,
Sister spirit, come away ;
What is this absorbs me quite,
Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirit, draws my breath,
Tell me, my soul, can this be death ?

"The world recedes, it disappears,
Heaven opens on my eyes, my ears ;
While sounds seraphic ring
Lend, lend your wings ;
I mount, I fly, O grave where is thy victory,
O death, where is thy sting ?"

"What is this that steals upon me now ?
Is it death—is it death ?
If this be death, I soon shall be,
From all pains and sorrow free ;
I shall the King of Glory see,
All is well—all is well.

"Bright angels are from glory come,
They're round my bed, and in my room ;
They want to bear my spirit home,
All is well—all is well."

"Jesu, Name all names above,
Jesu, best and dearest ;
Jesu, Fount of perfect love,
Holiest, tenderest, nearest ;
Jesu, source of grace completest,
Jesu purest, Jesu sweetest ;

Jesu, well of power Divine,
Make me, keep me, seal me Thine.

“Jesu, open me the gate,
That of old he entered ;
Who, in that most lost estate,
Wholly on Thee ventured ;
Thou, Whose wounds are ever pleading,
And Thy passion interceding ;
From my misery let me rise,
To a Home in Paradise.

“Thou didst call the Prodigal,
Thou didst pardon Mary ;
Thou, Whose words can never fail,
Love can never vary ;
Lord, to heal my lost condition,
Give—for Thou canst give—contrition ;
Thou canst pardon all mine ill,
If Thou wilt—oh, say, ‘I will.’

“Jesu, crowned with thorns for me,
Scourged for my transgression ;
Witnessing through agony,
That Thy good confession ;
Jesu, clad in purple raiment,
For my evils making payment ;
Let not all Thy woe and pain,
Let not Calvary be in vain.

“When I reach Death’s bitter sea,
And its waves roll higher ;
Help the more forsaking me,
As the storm draws nigher ;
Jesu, leave me not to languish,
Helpless, hopeless, full of anguish ;
Tell me—‘Verily, I say,
Thou shalt be with *Me* to-day.’

"Joyfully, joyfully, onward we move,
Bound to the land of bright spirits above ;
Jesus, our Saviour in mercy, says come,
Joyfully, joyfully, haste to your home.
Joyfully, joyfully, onward we move,
Bound to the land of bright spirits above.

"Soon will our pilgrimage end here below,
Soon to the presence of God shall we go ;
Then, if to Jesus our hearts shall be given,
Joyfully, joyfully, rest we in heaven.

"Teachers and kindred have passed on before,
Waiting, they watch us approaching the shore ;
Singing, to cheer us, while passing along,
Joyfully, joyfully, haste to your home.

"Sounds of sweet music there ravish the ear,
Harps of the blessed, your strains we shall hear ;
Filling with harmony, heaven's high dome,
Joyfully, joyfully, Jesu, we come.

"Death, with its arrows, may soon lay us low,
Safe in our Saviour we fear not the blow ;
Jesus hath broken the bars of the tomb—
Joyfully, joyfully, we will go home.

"Bright will the morn of eternity dawn,
Death shall be conquered, its sceptre be gone ;
Over the plains of sweet Canaan we'll roam,
Joyfully, joyfully, safely at home.

She particularly drew my attention to the following hymn, saying, "I have chosen it for *you*, mother, as well as for *myself*:"—

"Light of the world! O shine on us,
Thy little flock below ;
Shine on this path we daily tread,
Shine on each poor, defenceless head,

Shine through the shadows dark and dread,
That hover round us now.

“Light of the world! O shine on us,
Thy little pilgrim band;
Shine on the way once trod before
By Thine own feet, in sorrow sore,
That leads us onward to the shore
Of Zion's Sabbath-land.

“Light of the world! O shine on us,
Let us Thy Presence see
Shine backward with a lasting gleam,
A loving unpolluted stream,
From that bright world of which we dream,
To guide us there to Thee.

“Light of the world! be visible,
In every cloud be seen;
In every taste of soul-distress,
In every step of weariness,
Shine backward o'er this wilderness
That stretches out between.

“Light of the world! be merciful
And lead us safely on;
On through the rough and bleak highway,
Where perils wait in dread array,
To snare each pilgrim soul away,
When he is once alone.

“Light of the world! reveal—reveal,
And turn from us all harm;
Make clear the road to Jordan's side,
And meet us by its rushing tide;
For never evil may betide
Those sheltered by Thine arm.

“Light of the world! O shine on us,
As through that vale we flee;

That in the city, fair and bright,
 That lies beyond—beyond our sight,
 We each, in robes of bridal white,
 May stand at last with Thee."

And, as the shades of evening set in, she always wished to have repeated the well-known hymns:—

"Abide with me, fast falls the eventide," &c.

and

"Now the day is over," &c.

Then, as she neared Christmas, the hymns for the season were daily used, particularly the following:—

"The host of heaven that throne surrounding,
 Where everlasting splendours glow.
 'Mid lyres with ceaseless praise resounding,
 Beheld the earth involved in woe;
 Darkness with fearful wing lay brooding,
 Nor could lone Sinai's beacon red,
 Illume the midnight pall that spread
 Each glimmering ray of hope excluding,
 When, lo! a Saviour came,
 The star o'er Bethlehem gleamed,
 And angels tuned their harps of gold,
 To hail a world redeemed."

She would frequently have the two last lines repeated over and over again. She evinced a strong desire to receive the blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, and although she had not been confirmed, her minister did not hesitate to comply with her wish. She had been troubled with harassing and discomforting thoughts, and hoped, she said, "to receive

comfort;" nor was this hope in vain. "Who ever trusted in the Lord and was disappointed?" Comfort and strength came in a marvellous degree. Although she was occasionally depressed, yet the leading tone of her mind was an increasing desire "to depart and to be with Christ."

Her doctor's announcement that her lungs were going occasioned neither terror nor dismay; on the contrary, she seemed to hail the approach of dissolution, telling her sister and myself that she "would, if she might, be always near us," and, stroking my face caressingly, said, "Are you sorry my lungs are affected?" "Yes, but you are not." Then, with the sweetest smile, "No!" She grew worse daily, and her doctor apprehended effusion of the brain; yet, notwithstanding all this suffering, her chamber was for many days as the "land of Bèulah," as the gate of Heaven, not "a cloud did then arise, to hide her Saviour from her eyes." She was full of love, and had a word or a message for all. With the help of her sister she had her little earthly treasures brought to her bed, and disposed of them all to her friends, sending messages in writing to those whom she had not strength to see. To each member of her family she gave a lock of her hair, tied with white ribbon, "an emblem," she said, "of the white robes of Heaven." These were accompanied with a text of Scripture, or a few parting words of affection. For me was written, "For darling mother, and when she thinks of me, she must also think, 'And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.'" One day, alluding to her illness, she said, "Mother, you have been a comfort to me; I want you to die with me."

At another time, when I had retired for the night, she said, "Go and tell dear mother 'that Jesus lives.'"

At this period she seemed more of heaven than earth. Once, after sleeping, she said, I thought I heard a voice, saying, "My child, you are coming soon;" at another time I have been hearing the "endless Alleluia," at another, "I thought I was in Heaven with the angels."

Her parting interview with a young friend was most affecting. After charging her to live so as to meet her in Heaven, she said, "I can only think of the joy; I shall soon look upon my Saviour, not as hanging on the cross, but seated on the throne."

* To another friend she dictated the following farewell letter, which she requested might be sent, after her death, with her Bible.

" Nov. 28th, 1873.

" My dearest F——,

" I feel as if I should like to send you my dying message. I have always cared for you, ever since I have known you, and especially since my illness. Your letters have been a great pleasure to me and will always be kept. But I think F——, dear, that you know I have always cared for you. I send you my Bible, which has been a precious treasure to me, and when it comes to you will you look at the writing which will be in the place where, *last*, mother read to me. I hope, dear F——, you will read it every day for my sake; and may you always think of me. The marker enclosed in the 14th chapter of St. John, has, ever since I can remember, been my favourite chapter. I shall see my two dear sisters, and your dear sister, H——, and we shall often

talk about you ; and if the blessed spirits are allowed to hover around you, and all those on earth we dearly love, rest assured, dear F——, we shall hover around you, and all those we dearly loved upon this earth ; and we shall look forward to the time when we shall come to the gate of Heaven to welcome you there. I hope, dear F——, you will always read my Bible whilst you can see in it, and then put it away as a memento of an old friend. I shall look forward, Fanny, to seeing you in Heaven. You can think of me as being where “The songs of all the sinless sweep across the crystal sea.”

I hope you will often read my favourite chapter, and never, never forget me. With my fondest love, good-bye, and may God have you ever in His holy keeping.

To a relation as follows—

“ Dec. 1st, 1873.

“ My dear Uncle,—

“ With fond love I send you what I think will be my last message. I shall not see you any more here, but I hope to meet you in Heaven. I hope that you will never forget me, and that when you think of me it will be as a bright happy angel before the throne of God, tuning my golden harp and singing, “ Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive honour and glory, riches and blessing, majesty and power.” I shall see your little Helen, who, no doubt, is waiting to welcome you there. My favourite chapter is the 14th St. John and the 23rd Psalm.

I hope, too, dear Uncle, that *you* are looking forward to the time when there will be no more partings, no more sorrows, and no more pain, but when we shall all be

around the throne of God, where, "The songs of all the sinless sweep across the crystal sea," joining in the triumph song of "Holy, Holy, Holy."

Good-bye, and may God for ever have you in His holy keeping."

On her memorial card she requested might be the lines—"Jesus lives. Henceforth is death but the gate of life immortal."

She chose the hymns she wished to be sung on the Sunday after her funeral, adding, "'There is a Land of Pure Delight' will be a comfort to you, and mother has often repeated it to me."

She sent for her old nurse, to whom she was much attached, and, after an affecting leave-taking, added, "Meet me in Heaven." She frequently said, "I can think only of the joy." She had a strong desire to die in her sleep, and desired us all to pray that it might be so. She said she had only *one* earthly desire *more*, which was to see her brother E——.

Yet, although the messenger death was hourly expected, his actual coming was delayed yet a little season, and that frail bark which seemed, as she expressed it, "so near the haven," was to be drifted back for a little while to combat again with temptation and weakness. It was as if these glimpses of paradise had been vouchsafed as an earnest of the bliss which awaited the spirit when its emancipation from the corruptible body should come. But as yet the fine gold was not wholly purified, the refiner had not completed His process, so for wise and holy reasons she was permitted to become again a prey to harassing thoughts, doubts, and misgivings.

Nov. 26th. The dear one is much harassed by thinking that if she "rally for a time, she has done foolishly in speaking so freely of herself, and, that if the world get to know, she will be laughed at." She asks for special prayer for the removal of this temptation.

27th. This has been an anxious, happy day. Whilst our hearts have been wrung with anxiety, we have felt it a happiness, far surpassing all that earth can give, to see the resignation of our dear child.

29th. Her brother E—— has arrived. Her satisfied look at their meeting showed that now all her earthly wishes had been fulfilled. It is her special wish that *he* should communicate with her in the Blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ.

30th. At 9.30 this morning our darling's wish was gratified. With the brother she has so much desired to see she was permitted to hold Sacramental Communion with her Lord. In the early morning she complained that her mind was not quite so calm as she could wish, but afterwards she said, "I felt so beautiful when you were saying, 'With angels and archangels and all the company of Heaven,' &c."

Dec. 1st. In the early part of the day she was harassed with sad misgivings, lest, during her trying illness, she had spoken words tending to wound *me*, and for which she expressed *deep* sorrow. She was assured that *all, all* had been forgiven as soon as spoken, and that the little petulancies she so sincerely mourned were, undoubtedly, to be attributed to her disease. In the evening she said, "I have perfect peace."

Dec. 2nd. A—— has no fears to day. All is peace. She said she would not, if she might, change places with

anybody, she had such sweet thoughts. She thought she could not be very far from home; Heaven seemed very near. "I seem to hear a constant singing, 'Angels are in my room, waiting to bear me home.'" On being reminded that she might be waiting a little, to teach us patience, she said, "I am afraid I have been very impatient." She advised her youngest brother, when he felt sad about her, to read her favourite chapter (St. John, xiv.) After dozing at night, she said, "I have had another glimpse. I thought I heard a great number of people, with their harps, singing, 'We lift our souls to Thee, we lift our souls to Thee.'" "

Her belief in the efficacy of prayer increases daily; when she cannot doze she asks for prayer that she may do so.

And so the dark December days wore away, and Christmas once more appeared. She literally languished just on the borders of the promised land, waiting until the last sands of life had run out, calm and peaceful, except when the paroxysms of excitement caused by her mysterious disease caused a struggle both mental and physical which was fearful to witness.



CHAPTER XVI.

THE END.

"IT IS SOWN IN CORRUPTION, IT IS RAISED IN INCORRUPTION."

"Days and moments swiftly flying,
Blend the living with the dead,
Soon will you and I be lying,
Each within his narrow bed."

So sang Alberta as the preceding year was ushered in. Now, peaceful and quiet, she lay passively in her Father's hands, whilst the heartfelt prayer was breathed for her that the new-born year might be the harbinger of peace, and waft her into the Presence where is the "fulness of joy."

Whilst the year was yet in its infancy, her eldest brother left home for a foreign land. Much as we dreaded for her the parting, yet, when it came, the Divine promise was literally fulfilled. Her strength was equal to her day. When he had passed from her sight for ever, as regards this world, with a calmness that was *strength* to us, she very reverently said, "The

cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

Feb. 6th, 1874. The days pass wearily on. The dear sufferer lies in a most weak and helpless state.

Feb. 19th. For six nights past A—— has had no perceptible sleep. There is a constant longing to be in her "Father's home above." Her belief in the efficacy of prayer increases. In every emergency, in everything, she begs for prayer, and if it seem less "ardent," as she expresses it, she will have it repeated, saying, like the wrestler at Peniel, "*I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me.*"

But her dark seasons were not over. She was yet on the border-land. The fiery darts of her adversary were hurled at her with violence. After a most earnest prayer for strength and patience, whilst the necessary changes were performed about her bed, both would seem to give way, and she appeared for a time to be totally and uncontrollably under the power of the fell disease which was so slowly eating her precious life away. The slightest movement of the head was sufficient to bring on a paroxysm. Every change had to be performed as best it could, and none could be done without causing a most excessive irritation of the brain, which, for the time, deprived her of all self-control. At such painful crises she would, in deepest anguish, exclaim that "God had forgotten her, that He hid His face from her, that He would not hear." But when the weary brain was quieted down, the calmness would return with the wonted request for prayer and hymns.

If proofs had been wanting that her feet were firmly fixed on the Rock of Ages, the following quotation

from a little book, which she gave to one of her family, and which she had marked, as illustrative of her own experience, and for the benefit of the receiver, would be enough. On the fly-leaf she had caused to be written, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold."

"Christ is a King, and He giveth as a King; not to give one minute and take away the next. Therefore, pray not for pardon for your past sins, but for *sin*—the sin that will cleave to you till your dying hour." "Leave it to Christ. If you are willing to put yourself in His hands, to let Him do what He likes with you, He will undertake the responsibility of your future life. He will not leave you alone, till He has perfected your affections, changed the current of your thoughts, made the new life, the only life you can lead—He will pour out His Holy Spirit upon you. He is the Good Physician, and true faith is to put yourself in His hands by prayer, just as you would with an earthly physician. This is going to Him, this is believing in Him. He has healing medicines. If you ask ask Him thus to undertake your case, you will soon experience their effects. They may be severe remedies; they may try your whole spiritual constitution: the devil will not leave you without rending you. But do you think your soul's health is not worth a little discipline here below? Then go to the Good Physician, trust yourself in His hands; and ask Him at all costs, though His medicines may be nauseous, and His operations painful, to accept you

as his patient." When she drew the attention of this paragraph to her relative, she said "I did not come to this at once, it was by degrees."

But her work of suffering was nearly over; food was altogether left off, fruit and medicine supplied its place. The eager desire for hymns and prayer was almost incessant. She loved to have the descriptions of heaven read to her from the Revelation, of the City which hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to lighten it, and when we got to the end of the book, we began again, making suitable selections. This was generally done in an evening. In a morning a verse or two from the Psalms was selected. On the Sunday before her death I read from Psalm cxvi. "I love the Lord, because He hath heard my voice and my supplication." "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." "O Lord truly I am Thy servant; I am Thy servant, and the son of Thine handmaid. Thou hast loosed my bonds." "Do you think me better?" "No, darling;" but this led to the choice, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His Saints." "Oh," she said. In the evening I read from Rev. xv.—"And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God."

"And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty: just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints." On the last morning of her life I read selections from Psalm cxix, "This is my comfort in my affliction: for Thy word

hath quickened me." "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept Thy word." "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes." "I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me."

This was to have been her Confirmation day, a day to which, before her illness she had looked forward with delight.

In the early morning she did not appear worse than on former days; for it had been evident for some time that the frail tenement could not hold out much longer.

At nine o'clock her youngest brother read to her some favourite hymns, one was, "I came to Jesus, &c."

Then dreading the necessary tidying of her bed, the exactness of which had become a fatal necessity, and which she would on no account have omitted, she prayed aloud as follows,—

"O Lord, I am very weak this morning—My dear aunt is very weak—She has been watching beside me all night. O Lord, teach her to do my bed as I wish. O Lord, keep us from saying anything that would hurt each other's feelings—Stop the words, O Lord, do not let them come out of our mouths."

"Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try,
Prayer, the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high."

Feeling her own perfect weakness and inability to meet the necessity which her disease rendered imperative, she prayed to be kept from the very appearance

of evil, for as has been remarked before, when the paroxysms of excitement came on, which the *slightest* movement induced, she lost all self-control ; but when its violence ceased, she mourned over what she was unable to restrain.

At 10.30 with a look of anguish and distress not easily to be forgotten, she vainly attempted to get the hem of the sheet in a certain position. The movement of her fingers and the cast of feature showed that death sat upon her. At noon, however, she had regained her usual calm, and when I returned from morning duty, and laid my warm hands on her cold ones, she gently whispered, "pray for sleep." Her wish was granted, and these lines were quoted,—

"God of my life, to Thee I call,
Afflicted, at Thy feet I fall ;
When the great waterfloods prevail,
Leave not my trembling heart to fail."

After this she dozed, and then slept peacefully.

Being obliged to leave her for afternoon duty, I returned to look at her during recreation time, at half-past two, and felt uncertain, whether or not, she still slept, but whilst I was casting a longing, lingering look at my dying child, she opened her eyes and *looked* rather than *spoke* me back to her side and said, "Thou wilt come at four," (four o'clock.) After this she listened to her aunt who read to her some pieces from "The Night Watches," a book she had much liked. She told her to "make haste or she would not get it finished.

When I went at four o'clock, neither of us *spoke* much, and after our usual prayer she again dozed, and

continued to do so until I was relieved for tea, when she said, "*Thou wilt come back at twenty-five minutes past five.*" When I returned, she seemed not to notice I was there, which being most unusual, I tried to arouse her by saying, "I have finished and sent my letter to T——, darling, and hope he will get it." She made no response, but in a second or two, she tried to say something we could not understand, then laying my ear close to her lips, I succeeded in catching what I thought was, "Our father." She never spoke again, but sank rapidly into a state of unconsciousness. I took her wasted hand in mine, and she *gently*, yet perceptibly pressed hers underneath it. This was her last conscious act. For some time she appeared to sleep, and then at intervals she whined, moaned, and turned her hands inwards, and moved her arms convulsively as if in great pain, a tear fell from her eye, and then another, forcibly causing one to apply the beautiful lines,

"And O, '*now she has*' safely passed
Through every conflict, but '*this*' last,
Still '*now*' unchanging watch beside
Her '*dying bed* for Thou hast died.'
Now, '*point to realms of cloudless day,*
And wipe the latent tear away.'"

In my agony of mind at seeing the tears, I forgot that they were the usual accompaniment of death, until her doctor assured me that she was quite unconscious of suffering, and that the symptoms which distressed us so much, were simply mechanical; for the blood had ceased to flow to the brain. She continued in this state, yet breathing shorter, and shorter, until at ten

Death, like a narrow sea, divides
This heavenly land from ours.

“ O could we make our doubts remove,
Those gloomy doubts that rise,
And see the Canaan that we love,
With unbeckoned eyes.

“ Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o’er,
Not Jordan’s stream, nor death’s cold flood,
Should fright us from the shore.”

“ BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHICH DIE IN THE LORD.”

“ Beloved and honour’d fare thee well !
Go, in thy last long home to dwell ;
Softly our loving hands prepare
Thy narrow bed—sleep softly there !

“ Love looks below, with weeping eyes,
Where her long cherish’d treasure lies,
Our sweet companionship is o’er,
Our pilgrim friend returns no more !

“ Earth takes her own—this mortal frame ;
Eternity her part shall claim ;
And so we say, in humble trust,
The soul to God—the dust to dust.

“ Then looking up through sorrow’s night,
We trace the spirit’s homeward flight ;
The Prince of Life has mark’d that road,
Through the dark valley, home to God.

“ Where once the Master lowly lay,
Let the tired servant rest to-day ;
And in the Father’s house above,
For ever share *her* Master’s love.

" Thanks for Thy peace, all danger past,
Thanks for our own good hope at last ;
Weeping endureth for a night,
Joy cometh with the morning light.

" Lord, will that morning soon appear ?
May our own summers now be near ?
Shall sorrow soon be past and gone ?
Thy will be done—Thy will be done !

" Only prepare us, all Thy will,
Gladly to suffer or fulfil ;
Then call us to Thy heavenly rest,
With Thee, and with our *sister* blest."

AMEN.



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